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**MEMORIALISING LA PETITE GUERRE:
REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING WORLD WAR I
IN LUXEMBOURG**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

War memorials constitute insightful resources and tools for historians and other scholars to provoke and answer questions in relation to war memorialisation, commemoration, and collective memory. Constructed with the intention to last, war memorials are visible and tangible artefacts within the rural and urban landscape that can illuminate the past, or at least one version thereof, as well as the present. This concept of viewing war memorials as objects to be studied, evaluated and critically analysed is applied in this PhD thesis in an attempt to assess Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI; a war that has for a long time been overshadowed by WWII to the point that it has been described as '*la petite guerre*'.

This thesis employs a phenomenological and biographical approach to examine war memorials, concentrating on specific case studies to construct their biographies from moment of inception to their present condition by synthesising results from conventional desk-based assessments and experiential fieldwork. Rather than only evaluating what is present and visible, and who or what is being remembered through these war memorials, attention is also given to how and to what extent WWI has been memorialised in Luxembourg since the interwar period, thereby also concentrating on what has been omitted and consequently forgotten. This allows to analyse and discuss how the post-war narrative is not only mirrored in the war memorials but how these memorials facilitated the propagation of said narrative, remaining uncontested for decades. Further, the biographies enable to highlight any alterations to the memorials and their surroundings over time, and to comment on their most recent chapter through observations gained during a phenomenological survey that is anchored in the here and now to assess their importance and meaning from a contemporary perspective. Apart from the biographies of selected WWI memorials, the main products of this PhD research are a comprehensive inventory of all identified WWI memorials in Luxembourg with corresponding location maps which will - hopefully - set the base for future in-depth studies in this hitherto neglected field.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 La petite guerre

The years 1914-1918 have gone down in history as the first truly global industrialised war, which resulted in a huge scale of human loss and the vast destruction of whole landscapes, many of its traces still visible today. All around the world this conflict is known under various names and terms, be that World War I (from here on abbreviated WWI), the First World War, the Great War, ‘the great seminal catastrophe of this century’¹ or even the now mainly sardonically expression ‘the war to end all wars’.² The moniker the Great War, or *la Grande Guerre* in French, is especially prevalent and commonly used in combatant nations proclaimed the victors after the signing of the Armistice on 11th November 1918. As underlined by Annika Mombauer, who has written extensively on WWI, and also on the centenary from 2014-2018 from a German perspective, this conflict was even increasingly cited as ‘*der große Krieg*’ in Germany during the centenary debates, highlighting a shift in perception and a newfound interest among the German public towards a war long overshadowed by World War II (from here on abbreviated WWII).³ The title of Great War or *Grande Guerre* is, however, not a synonym for WWI used in all nations involved in or affected by this conflict, at least not from a contemporary perspective.

Luxembourg, a small grand duchy sandwiched between France, Belgium, and Germany, had its neutrality violated through the invasion and occupation by Imperial German troops for the whole duration of the war. During this time, the Luxembourgish population suffered food shortages, fell victim to aerial attacks by the Entente, could hear and feel the artillery and explosions from the nearby Western Front, and was caught up in political and social turmoil, its independence even endangered in the immediate aftermath of the war. Meanwhile, several hundred expatriates fought in different forces of the Entente, the majority of them in the *Légion étrangère*, or French Foreign

¹ As coined by George Kennan.

² As coined by H. G. Wells.

³ Mombauer, A. (2017) The German centenary of the First World War. *War & Society*, 36 (4), p. 278.

Legion, its combatants referred to as *légionnaires*. Despite this, WWI holds a rather marginalised place in Luxembourg's history and collective memory inasmuch that the war of 1914-1918 has instead been described as '*la petite guerre*', meaning 'the little war'.⁴ But how did it come to this designation?

Still largely neglected and under-represented within Luxembourg's historiography as well as academic studies and research, it is perhaps not surprising that the Great War is seen as just a '*petite guerre*'. Yet, this designation is nonetheless quite unique amongst the nations involved in this conflict, indicating Luxembourg's general stance and opinion towards WWI. This stands in stark contrast to WWII, which has in lieu acquired the title of '*Grande Guerre*' from a Luxembourgish perspective, as the population suffered immensely during the Nazi occupation and their attempts of wholly swallowing Luxembourg into the Third Reich, the unlawful forced conscription of Luxembourg's youth into the Wehrmacht, the deportation of families to labour camps under the concept of *Sippenhaft* (collective punishment of kin) and the vast destruction of the northern parts of Luxembourg caused by the Battle of the Bulge. WWII is therefore widely considered as the breaking point in Luxembourg's foundation of a national identity.⁵

This disparity is already evident when only considering the different academic research that has been undertaken for both world wars from a Luxembourgish perspective by students at either the University of Luxembourg or abroad, presenting a major gap for WWI. According to figures collected in 2014 by Benoît Majerus, there has been no PhD thesis dedicated to WWI in contrast to five PhD theses focusing on its successor. The same clear overshadowing of WWII over WWI can also be observed for Bachelor and Masters' dissertations. While there are 37 dissertations on the subject of WWII, WWI can only credit three. With two of these dissertations on WWI written in 2012 and one in 2008 it clearly

⁴ Majerus, B. (2014) Les historiens luxembourgeois monomaniaques? In: B. Majerus et al. (eds.) *1914-1918: Guerre(s) au Luxembourg – Krieg(e) in Luxemburg*. Luxembourg: Cappybarabooks, p. 10; Majerus, B. (2015) *Le Centenaire de la Première Guerre mondiale au Luxembourg*.

⁵ Majerus, B., Roemer, C. and Thommes, G. (2014). Introduction. In: B. Majerus et al (eds.) *1914-1918: Guerre(s) au Luxembourg – Krieg(e) in Luxemburg*. Luxembourg: Cappybarabooks, pp. 6-7; Scuto, D. (2018c) À propos. *Tageblatt*, 105. Jg., n° 274, 24/25 November, p. 9.

demonstrates the complete lack of attention given to this conflict before the 2000s on a higher education level.⁶

This distinctive attribution of '*petite guerre*' for WWI from a Luxembourgish perspective becomes even more poignant when looking at how this conflict has been memorialised and commemorated in Luxembourg since 1918. While only a few memorials commemorating WWI exist, no less than 543 memorials, be that monuments, memorial plaques, or sculptures, can be found all over Luxembourg dedicated to WWII and its victims. This is a considerable amount bearing in mind the small size and population of Luxembourg. This list of WWII memorials, as researched by Sonja Kmec and Benoît Majerus in 2009, would be even longer if it also included memorials erected abroad for Luxembourgers who died in camps.⁷ This striking yet understandable imbalance and disproportion on a quantitative level reinforces the assumption that WWI plays but a supporting role in Luxembourg's history, memorialisation, commemoration, and collective memory, with WWII taking centre stage.

Apart from this vast difference in numbers, it can be suggested that the few WWI memorials that do exist remain relatively unknown except for the *Monument du Souvenir* (Monument of Remembrance), better known under its moniker *Gëlle Fra* ('golden woman' or 'gilded lady') due to its gilded female statue (see Figure 6-1). Historian Denis Scuto, who lists no more than six WWI memorials, even asks his readership in an article published in national newspaper *Tageblatt* in 2018 how many of them could name or locate the other memorials.⁸ Prior to this research, I myself had little knowledge regarding the commemoration and memorialisation of WWI in Luxembourg despite being Luxembourgish and having lived there for 20 years. Scuto's challenge to name all WWI memorials and their locations coupled with my own realisation of having little knowledge on this subject therefore prompted a greater interest in those unknown and sometimes even 'invisible' memorials, albeit holding such a significance for the Luxembourgish people during the interwar period.

⁶ Majerus, B. (2014), p. 14; see full list on online blog: Majerus, B. (2014) *WW1 - WW2 in Luxembourgish historiography* 3:42.

⁷ Kmec, S. and Majerus, B. (2009) Les monuments de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. In: P. Bousch et al. (eds.) *Der Luxemburg Atlas/Atlas du Luxembourg*. Cologne: Emons, pp. 28-29.

⁸ Scuto, D. (2018a) Éischte Weltkrich: La Grande Guerre au Luxembourg. *Tageblatt*, 21 April, p. 6.

1.2 Centenaries

1.2.1 WWI centenary

Luxembourg's stance towards WWI and its designation as '*petite guerre*' could further be observed during the centenary from 2014-2018. Living in the United Kingdom where the remembrance of WWI is characterised every year on Remembrance Sunday by the two-minute silence, the laying down of wreaths and with poppies visible on the coats of many people, I was able to observe first-hand the many commemorative events, art installations and exhibitions to mark the centennial years of WWI. Even on the other side of the world, I witnessed and experienced the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Landings and significance that Anzac Day still holds to this day during my travels around New Zealand in 2015.

Yet, when it comes to the WWI centenary and the events planned around this historic moment, Luxembourg presents a very different case. According to Pol Schock, the small grand duchy, populated by rigid politicians, appeared to offer implacable resistance to the Europe-wide efforts to do justice to the centenary in 2014.⁹ Schock continues that, while the rest of Europe seemingly marked the centenary by planning a multitude of commemorative events, special exhibitions, art installations, or documentaries, the Luxembourgish government per contra seemed to view this momentous event as insignificant, reluctant to pay it much attention. This was the attitude generally associated with WWI within Luxembourg for many decades to the point that this disregard or even neglect of anything WWI-related practically seemed traditional, both in political circles and academic research, creating a great vacuum as phrased by Schock.¹⁰ Moreover, Schock highlights that when it comes to the centenary, the Luxembourgish government even went the opposite direction insofar as a planned national WWI exhibition was actually cancelled by the government in early 2014. However, the government thereby overlooked the slowly increasing and lively interest into this long-neglected war by the general public.¹¹

⁹ Schock, P. (2014) Don't mention the war! *forum*, n° 340, p. 54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Politicians, journalists and historians also expressed their discontent in regard to the government's decision to axe this WWI exhibition such as Benoît Majerus on his online blog titled "*La petite guerre au Luxembourg n'aura pas lieu*".¹² A team of historians from the University of Luxembourg, among them Majerus, had already commenced research and work for an exhibition titled "*La Petite Guerre: Le Luxembourg entre 1914 et 1918*", scheduled to open in summer 2015 - thereby already joining the centenary a year too late. Majerus points out on his blog that even though the request was made by the previous government, the new Minister of Culture had promised the continuation of this exhibition in writing on 10th December 2013, only for the new government to not provide the contractually promised funding for this endeavour.¹³ In response to the cancelled exhibition, new Prime Minister Xavier Bettel was thus accused of "absolute historical ignorance".¹⁴

Nevertheless, this does not mean that no exhibitions or projects on the subject of WWI took place in Luxembourg between 2014 and 2018, contributing to a noticeable increased interest by the population in a war that has long left the spheres of living memory. Yet, as noted by Majerus, many of these initiatives by private actors were personal and one-off, and of a rather fragmented character lacking a common thread, hardly able to counterbalance the quasi-non-commemoration on an official level.¹⁵

One project by the University of Luxembourg was the creation of a Twitter account (@RealTimeWW1) tweeting the events from a hundred years ago in real time as they had occurred in an effort to bring the events of the war closer to the public and to get them engaged by using social media.¹⁶ Additionally, students of the University of Luxembourg, led by historians Marie-Paule Jungblut and Michel Pauly, created a digital historical walking tour of Luxembourg City on the theme of WWI. Available to download as an app on *izi.TRAVEL*, including historical photographs and videos, and equipped with an audio guide, points of

¹² The name of this online blog is a little pun on the famous French play "*La guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu*" (The Trojan War Will Not Take Place).

¹³ Majerus, B. (2014) *La petite guerre au Luxembourg n'aura pas lieu*.

¹⁴ Bumb, C. (2014) Historiker wirft Bettel "absolute historische Ignoranz" vor. *Luxemburger Wort*, 13 April.

¹⁵ Majerus, B. (2015).

¹⁶ Clavert, F. (2016) Échos du centenaire de la Première Guerre mondiale sur Twitter. *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, (3), p.18.

interest are for example Clausen, a neighbourhood that fell victim to aerial attacks, the tour also making a stop at the memorial dedicated to its civilian deaths. This digital tour throughout the capital also informs users of how inhabitants reacted to the bombings, but also covers themes like food shortages and inflation.¹⁷ The tour with 14 different locations and scenes relevant to WWI in Luxembourg City ends at the famous *Monument du Souvenir*, or *Gëlle Fra*. Several local temporary exhibitions throughout the country also managed to get the war and events surrounding it closer to the public, shedding light on various themes through different perspectives. Among them was the 2014 exhibition on Luxembourg's experience of WWI through the lens of literature, organised by the *Centre national de littérature* in Mersch¹⁸ as well as an exhibition in 2018 on migrations in the industrial town of Dudelange during the war¹⁹, each exhibition with corresponding publications.

In May 2018, the Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) at the University of Luxembourg launched a digital and interactive exhibition: "*Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*". Still accessible online to this day, this innovative exhibition available in English, French and German was the response to the previously cancelled exhibition, ironically costing four times more than the physical exhibition would have.²⁰ Rather than it being a temporary exhibition like most local ones during the centenary years, one aim of this digital exhibition was to continue to grow over the years to come, gradually adding new themes and chapters to its repertoire. In an article from April 2018 in *Tageblatt*, Denis Scuto, one of the directors of this exhibition, underlines the purpose and importance of this exhibition as a vehicle for new research opportunities. The article further announces new themes to be added in the years to come to the existing collection: a chapter on migrations during the war scheduled for September 2018, a chapter on the year 1919 and a chapter on the *légionnaires* to be added in January 2019 and in 2020 respectively.²¹ Yet, having visited the website throughout the duration of my research, those announced

¹⁷ Jungblut, M-P. (2018b) Eine digital geführte historische Wanderung. *Ons Stad*, n° 118, p. 21.

¹⁸ Lieb, D., Marson, P. and Weber, J. (2014) *Luxemburg und der Erste Weltkrieg: Literaturgeschichte(n)*. Mersch: Centre national de littérature (CNL).

¹⁹ Reuter, A. et al. (eds.) (2018) *Être d'ailleurs en temps de guerre (1914-1918): étrangers à Dudelange, Dudelangeois à l'étranger*. Mutations: Mémoires et Perspectives du Bassin Minier, n° 10. Luxembourg: Fondation Bassin Minier.

²⁰ *Luxemburger Wort*, 170. Jg., n° 261 (09.11.2018), p. 2.

²¹ Scuto, D. (2018a), p. 6.

additional chapters could not be located, which raises the question as to what happened to these proposed additions? Despite those currently missing new chapters, the digital exhibition is a great way to bring WWI closer to the public, given its tri-lingual nature and easy accessibility.

Even in the years following the centenary, exhibitions related to WWI themes were set up, such as the very short-lived exhibition “*Doughboys in Luxembourg*” at *Musée National d'Histoire Militaire* in Diekirch on the history of the US troops during their short stay in Luxembourg after the end of the war. From July 2021 to February 2022, the *Musée Dräi Eechelen* in Luxembourg City showcased the exhibition “*Légionnaires*” exploring the Luxembourgish volunteers who fought in the *Légion étrangère* - this could thus be seen as the missing additional chapter of the abovementioned digital exhibition. The physical exhibition “*Légionnaires*” included a catalogue as well as an interactive game accessible via smartphone engaging players in a digital treasure hunt around the capital. The idea was to extend the exhibition beyond its general confines of museum walls and for players to uncover and explore the history of the *légionnaires* in the places significant to their journey.²²

Despite initial hiccups regarding the cancelled exhibition, the centenary can still be viewed as a turning point, with not just awakening a greater interest into this era of Luxembourg’s past among the general public but also as evident by new publications and scholarly work undertaken during those years. One example of this peak in interest is “*1914-1918: Guerre(s) au Luxembourg - Krieg(e) in Luxemburg*”.²³ Published in collaboration with the University of Luxembourg, 18 historians retell the events of this period, using various approaches and covering themes such as economy, censorship of the press, war damage caused by the aerial attacks, or propaganda. However, as commented by Majerus, one of the editors and contributors of this publication, the book still exposes the weakness of Luxembourg’s historiography on the theme of WWI, with most of the authors

²² C²DH (2021) *Légionnaires: exhibition and rallye*.

²³ Majerus, B., Roemer, C. and Thommes, G. (eds.) (2014) *1914-1918: Guerre(s) au Luxembourg – Krieg(e) in Luxemburg*. Luxembourg: Capybarabooks.

not being specialists on this conflict. Instead, they approached their traditional research themes and applied it to WWI.²⁴

Scuto also confirms this increase in interest for WWI naming a number of Bachelor and Masters' dissertations completed around the time of the centenary, including among others research on Luxembourgers in the French forces, the Luxembourgish steel industry and the manufacturing of arms, Luxembourgers in French prison of war camps from 1914 to 1920, but also on the much neglected topic of Luxembourgers in the Imperial German Army.²⁵ The WWI centenary had thus indeed a great impact on its research and historiography within Luxembourg, which will hopefully not decline again the further we move away from the centenary years.

On an official commemoration level, only few events and ceremonies carried out by the State took place during the centenary; however, not to the same magnitude or with the same crowds as observed in other nations with a long-standing tradition of WWI remembrance.²⁶ To remember the invasion by Imperial Germany and the start of a four yearlong military occupation, sirens were sound for two minutes throughout the country on 2nd August 2014 with a wreath-laying and ceremony at the aforementioned *Gëlle Fra* in Luxembourg City.²⁷ Other small commemorative ceremonies at this monument were then also held on 11th November during the centennial years, as well as at other local war memorials, such as at the *Monuments aux Morts* in front of the *Musée National de la Résistance* (National Museum of Resistance) in Esch-sur-Alzette.²⁸ In 2015, Prime Minister Xavier Bettel inaugurated a memorial plaque for the Luxembourgers who fought on the side of the Allies during WWI at *Les Invalides* in Paris.²⁹

A slightly bigger but still modest commemorative ceremony was held on 11th November 2018 to mark the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice and thereby the end of the centenary. The ceremony in front of the *Gëlle Fra* was, however, not held at 11am as observed in France or the United Kingdom, but

²⁴ Majerus, B. (2015).

²⁵ Scuto, D. (2018c), p. 9.

²⁶ Majerus, B. (2015).

²⁷ Sirenen erinnern an Kriegsbeginn. *Luxemburger Wort*, (01.08.2014).

²⁸ *Luxemburger Wort*, 168. Jg., n° 270 (18.11.2016), pp. 36-39.

²⁹ Majerus, B. (2015).

later in the afternoon, as Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, Grand Duc Henri and Grand Duchesse Maria Teresa first had to sprint over from Paris where they had been invited to attend the official events in the morning.³⁰ Their attendance at the ceremonies in Paris seemingly taking precedence over the later ceremony at the *Gëlle Fra* is particular interesting. This can be interpreted as another clue as to why WWI is regarded as '*petite guerre*' within Luxembourg. Simultaneously, it can be seen as a continuation of a very selective memory and remembrance linked to a narrative that was crafted in Luxembourg after the end of the war, to which the inauguration of the abovementioned plaque at *Les Invalides* might also belong. It is this selectiveness and the influence of this post-war narrative, which portrays Luxembourg as one of the Allies, and underlines Luxembourg's relation with France, and is seen mirrored in Luxembourg's memorialisation and commemoration of WWI, that my thesis aims to address.

1.2.2 Centenary of the Gëlle Fra

Only a few years after the end of the WWI centenary, Luxembourg experienced another centenary of great magnitude: the centenary of the *Gëlle Fra* in 2023. In contrast to the WWI centenary, this anniversary was arguably more anticipated, and certainly of higher national significance. Situated on *Place de la Constitution* in Luxembourg City (see Appendix 2), this war memorial is the best-known monument in Luxembourg. Officially classified as national cultural heritage since 2002³¹, the *Gëlle Fra* is a landmark and symbol of Luxembourg's identity, independence, and history, as well as the site of official ceremonies and other public events. Featuring on postcards, fridge magnets, and other types of souvenirs, the memorial with its gilded female statue has even become a popular tourist attraction, which is quite unique for a memorial, let alone a war memorial. Initially erected to commemorate Luxembourgish volunteers who fought in the *Légion étrangère* and the Belgian Army during WWI, the *Gëlle Fra* experienced a very turbulent history, marked by initial critiques of its design in the 1920s, its destruction in 1940 by the Nazis, the statue's subsequent mysterious disappearance and decades-long absence, and its rediscovery in the 1980s leading to a reconstruction and second inauguration in 1985. What started

³⁰ *Tageblatt*, 105. Jg., n° 263 (12.11.2018), p. 8.

³¹ See list on INPA (2023) *Immeubles et Objets bénéficiant d'une Protection Nationale*.

as a memorial for WWI combatants morphed into a memorial for all wars in which Luxembourgers participated, gradually becoming a symbol of independence, resistance, freedom, and Luxembourgish identity.

The anticipation and importance of the centenary of the *Gëlle Fra* thus becomes evident, given the monument's high national value and status. In the weeks and days leading up to the centenary of the *Gëlle Fra* on 27th May 2023 - a hundred years since its first inauguration - different newspaper outlets such as *Luxemburger Wort*, *Tageblatt* as well as RTL (Radio Télévision Luxembourg) published a series of articles and short videos on their respective websites. A 10-minute documentary was also broadcasted on national television (RTL) on 24th May during the main evening news. Focus was given to the memorial's creator Claus Cito, the mystery around the model for the female statue, the memorial's destruction in 1940, and the events surrounding the statue in recent decades. The *Gëlle Fra* is surrounded by various myths, unresolved questions and anecdotes about the statue's destruction and disappearance, such as the story of one of the statue's original toes being picked up by a student after the statue had been toppled down from the obelisk, breaking off her feet, and now curated by antiquarian Armand Wagner, or that parts of the original plinth were scattered after its destruction in 1940 with one piece rediscovered on privately owned land.³²

The centenary of the *Gëlle Fra* was also one of the main headlines on its anniversary date, second to the upcoming local elections. Given the *Gëlle Fra*'s raised status as a national monument and symbol, it was expected to be widely covered in the press and media; a privilege likely not to be granted to other WWI memorials also celebrating their centenary in the 2020s. This goes to show that the *Gëlle Fra* holds a different level of meaning and importance than other WWI memorials in Luxembourg. To mark the memorial's 100th anniversary, a celebratory event took place at *Place de la Constitution* on 27th May 2023, attended by Grand Duc Henri and Grand Duchesse Maria Teresa, Prime Minister Xavier Bettel as well as other Luxembourgish ministers and officials. People also had the opportunity to lay down flowers at the monument and visit a photo

³² See video and online article: Wiroth, D. (2023) Déi onbekannte Säit vun der Gëlle Fra. RTL, 27 May.

exhibition of the monument.³³ Apart from the official ceremony, and the various articles and reports on the *Gëlle Fra*, a commemorative stamp picturing the *Gëlle Fra* was also created, a first in its hundred-year history.

The story of the *Gëlle Fra* and celebrating her centenary is perhaps quite unique, but still highlights that war memorials have life-stories, marked by different political or social events and changes, are subject to alterations, relocations, or in the case of the *Gëlle Fra* even destruction, and often with new meanings ascribed to them over time. While some war memorials might grow in standing, such as the *Gëlle Fra*, others run the risk of being forgotten, overlooked, and becoming just another mundane feature in the landscape. Yet, whichever their fate, war memorials have the potential to provoke questions, as already posited by Ken Inglis.³⁴ Being tangible reminders of the past, war memorials can shed light on past events, on the people surrounding it and on their evolution over time, just like any other artefact. War memorials can either support or challenge accepted historical narratives and demonstrate how these narratives are presented and visualised through the act of memorialisation and commemoration, be this through who the initiators were, the choice of location, design, inscription, importance or meaning attached to them. Through this, they do not only allow us to ask questions as to who or what is being remembered, but also in which way and who the intended audience was meant to be. Likewise, not just the obvious and visible should be considered but also what has been omitted. As argued by Michael Kolb,

“Commemoration is contingent upon a place and a time, allowing a monument to represent a medium that carries important messages, urging us to not only remember, but to remember in a certain way. A monument is intentionally constructed to enhance recollection in a fixed and permanent fashion, integrating memories related to the narrative of commemoration, and serving as a spatial anchor that holds firm in the dynamic flow of memory-making.”³⁵

In that sense, do the few WWI memorials in Luxembourg also encourage us to not only remember the people and events of WWI, but to remember them in a

³³ D"“Gëlle Fra” kritt e Samschdeg 100 Joer. *RTL*, (23.05.2023).

³⁴ Inglis, K. S. (1992) War Memorials: Ten Questions for Historians. *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, 167, pp. 5-6.

³⁵ Kolb, M. (2020) *Making Sense of Monuments: Narratives of Time, Movement and Scale*. London: Routledge, p. 4

certain way, thereby simultaneously risking other memories falling into oblivion? And how can these war memorials not only shape but also re-shape a narrative of historic events?

1.3 Towards a biographical and phenomenological study of war memorials in Luxembourg

My thesis concerns Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI in which the war memorials themselves take centre stage and present the main set of primary data, exploring their potential as mediums of what they express as much as what they do not. Although other aspects of commemoration are also addressed in my thesis as they are intrinsically linked to memorialisation, the main focus will be on how WWI has been memorialised in Luxembourg within the public domain through these tangible and permanent reminders. This includes different types of war memorials such as monuments and plaques, but also street names. Through this analysis of Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI, different questions as to how this conflict has been remembered will be explored, supporting existing sources and arguments on this subject, both in relation to war memorials in general and Luxembourg's WWI memorials in particular. Additionally, my research and results support the notion that the designation of '*petite guerre*' applies as much to its memorialisation as it does to its historiography and place in Luxembourg's collective memory.

There exists a correlation between a nation's role, experience, involvement and impact of WWI and its subsequent memorialisation and place within its collective memory (Chapter 2), which will be exemplified by focusing on Luxembourg. The notion that memorials do not only encourage us to remember past events and people, but also to remember them in a certain way, highly influenced by the social and political climate of the time of their construction, is closely connected to this correlation and the historical narrative that was developed after the war, with degrees of myth-building. In that sense, it is also crucial to not only look at what or who is being memorialised, but also in which way and through which means. By taking Luxembourg and selected WWI memorials as focal point, my thesis aims to demonstrate how Luxembourg's particular post-war narrative (Chapter 4) is not only mirrored in its memorialisation of WWI, but

how these memorials have helped to propagate this constructed narrative since the interwar period thereby rendering it uncontested for decades.

Simultaneously, other aspects which would counteract this post-war narrative will be considered and which also contribute to forgetting. As will be elaborated throughout this thesis, the line between remembering and forgetting is a thin one, and war memorials often play an important role in this. Therefore, when it comes to Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI, questions as to who or what is being remembered should always be followed by questions as to who or what is being omitted.

Further, the role and importance that these WWI memorials still hold a hundred years later are being examined by assessing these memorials through a contemporary lens, thereby expanding their life-stories from their time of construction and inauguration. Any changes over time, which might include any type of physical and visible alteration of a memorial or memorial site, as well as the addition of new or multiple meanings, will also be highlighted and evaluated critically. To do this, I proposed to experience these memorials first-hand through experiential and phenomenological fieldwork, an approach often used in disciplines such as archaeology, giving my thesis a much more interdisciplinary character (Chapter 3). This in turn allows for different results and insights.

Firstly, my thesis is the first attempt at an in-depth study of WWI memorialisation in Luxembourg. Apart from considering the very few well-known WWI memorials, such as the *Gëlle Fra*, also smaller and lesser-known memorials are included. For lack of a comprehensive list of various WWI memorials in Luxembourg by either research institutions or other public bodies, providing details on aspects such as date of inauguration, type, location, description, and photographs, a first aim is therefore to identify as many WWI memorials as possible. This was done through initial desk-based assessment, using a variety of sources, and phenomenological fieldwork. This then leads to the main products created through my research: an inventory and location maps of all hitherto identified WWI memorials in Luxembourg (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

Secondly, through my observations gathered during the phenomenological surveys which represent the most current state of these identified memorials,

my thesis attempts to construct their biography. By adding this latest chapter, their evolution over time, including any changes, can be more easily assessed rather than limiting their life-stories to their time of inception and construction. This in turn allows to expand on existing literature, with many of the smaller memorials having received little to no attention.

Thirdly, the information gathered through the inventory, the location maps, and the biographies, creates opportunities for new avenues of approaches and research into this largely unexamined subject. It would facilitate for subsequent comparative studies, be this with WWII memorials within Luxembourg or other war memorials outside its borders. One of the primary objectives of this research is hence to set the ground base of WWI memorialisation studies in Luxembourg and also to expand on the existing corpus of memorialisation studies in general through my chosen approaches.

In a first step, however, the terminology around the themes of commemoration and memorialisation needs to be outlined, providing different definitions used within this thesis. This is followed by an initial historiographical review on the wider theme of war memorialisation, which has garnered a certain popularity among different scholars as evident by the continuous growing body of research and publications especially in the last three decades.

1.4 Commemoration, memorialisation, and war memorials

Even though memorialisation and commemoration are interrelated concepts in relation to remembering, recalling, or honouring past events or people, all within the general umbrella term of remembrance, and therefore often used as synonyms and interchangeably, for the purpose of this thesis, memorialisation will be considered separately from commemoration.

According to Charles Turner, commemoration refers to “all those devices through which a nation recalls, marks, embodies, discusses or argues about its past, and to all those devices which are intended to create or sustain a sense of

belonging [...]”.³⁶ Turner also notes that commemoration encompasses both public and official ceremonies or remembrance rituals, as well as individual, personal and private acts of recollection, along with public discourse regarding the meaning and importance of historical events. Moreover, commemoration includes the creation of memorials, such as monuments or plaques, the dedication of sites of memory, the construction of museums, the naming of streets, and the act of visiting these places.³⁷ Similarly, Kenneth Foote and Maoz Azaryahu note that commemorative events and rituals generally take place in or near shrines, memorials, museums, or cemeteries allowing the past to be rendered material and visual.³⁸

It is this creation and construction of permanent, tangible, and visible memorials which are objects, structures, or architectural edifices of different shapes and forms, holding single or multiple meanings and functions, sacred or non-sacred, to be used for commemoration as describe above, which is understood and used in this thesis as memorialisation. In other words, in this thesis memorialisation is defined through its creation and construction of memorials as the visible and physical manifestation of commemoration, whereas commemoration is defined as the act of remembering, honouring, or paying tribute. Memorialisation is thus just one aspect or component of commemoration, both terms fitting under the umbrella term remembrance.

Equally, the terms memorial and monument are often used as synonyms without a clear distinction made between them. Albeit interrelated and overlapping, these terms should also be considered separately. In this thesis, the term memorial is used and understood as any object dedicated to or commemorating past events or people, whereas a monument is - as the name implies - a monumental architectural, and often artistic, structure. A memorial plaque, a book or even a museum can therefore be regarded and defined as a memorial, but not necessarily as a monument. In other words, a memorial can apply to almost anything that was created for a commemorative purpose or to which a

³⁶ Turner, C. (2006) Nation and Commemoration. In: G. Delanty and K. Kumar (eds.) *The SAGE handbook of nations and nationalism*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, p. 206.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

³⁸ Foote, K. E., and Azaryahu, M. (2007) Toward a Geography of Memory: Geographical Dimensions of Public Memory and Commemoration. *Journal of Political & Military Sociology*, 35 (1), p. 127.

commemorative connotation was attached, but not every memorial is a monument.

Consequently, a war memorial can hence be defined as “any tangible object which has been erected or dedicated to commemorate war, conflict, victory or peace; or casualties who served in, were affected by or killed as a result of war, conflict or peacekeeping; or those who died as a result of accident or disease whilst engaged in military service.”³⁹ A war memorial can thus be a monument, a statue, a plaque, a roll of honour, a medal, a building, but also a street name.

As forwarded by Turner, street names - much like monuments - count among the most concrete and lasting ways for a nation to direct its members' attention to issues of historical importance.⁴⁰ Street names with the intention to act as devices to commemorate a past event or historical figure can almost be placed at the intersection of memorialisation and commemoration. Street names are physical memorials through their street sign functioning as a memorial plaque and the actual street encompassing its buildings, but they can also be considered as a more abstract concept of commemoration.

Lastly, the space that these various types of war memorials occupy, be that in an urban or rural setting, comprising their immediate surroundings either on their own or in conjunction with other nearby memorials, is being defined in this thesis as memorial space or memorial site.

According to David Lowenthal, “what is potentially visible is omnipresent”, implying that memorials and memorial spaces possess the power to solidify the past as lasting elements within the landscape.⁴¹ Memorials are therefore physical and visible reminders of the past, which have the ability to act as storytellers. Built with the intention to last and to remind future generations of the past, memorials are consequently meant to be always present, unlike commemorative events, rituals or ceremonies which occur on specific dates, generally with a determined start and end time. As mentioned by Turner, ritual and commemorative performances held at these memorials may evoke stronger

³⁹ See register and guide: Imperial War Museum (2024) *War Memorials Register*.

⁴⁰ Turner, C. (2006), p. 210.

⁴¹ As cited in Foote, K. E. and Azaryahu. M. (2007), p. 127.

communal feelings than the mute and immobile memorial itself. Nevertheless, these sentiments may dissipate once the performance concludes, waiting for the following year to be repeated. Memorials on the other hand remain where they are, especially in the case of monuments and memorial buildings.⁴² Although, as will be demonstrated and discussed in this thesis, they are not always as static or permanent as one might expect. With their ability to blend into everyday life, memorials may become fixed, mundane, and ever-present features of a landscape, yet simultaneously run the risk of being overlooked and ultimately becoming invisible and being forgotten.⁴³

1.5 A historiographical review

War remembrance and memory remains a prominent topic among scholars, reaching beyond both world wars, or from a solely Western perspective - although those still account for a large portion of publications and research. For example, papers within “*The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*”⁴⁴ edited by T.G. Ashplant et al. do not only encompass WWI or WWII, but also political memory in South Africa in relation to the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and the memory and fiction of the Portuguese colonial wars. Also offering a different perspective is, for example, Ken Lunn’s comparison of Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore in his paper from 2006, exploring how these nations remember WWII.⁴⁵ Another example is a study by Kristina Seefeldt, who examines the various emotions, reactions and meanings that memorials of the Global War on Terrorism in the USA can evoke, also pointing out which narratives are included or excluded in these memorials.⁴⁶

Looking at the body of research and scholarly work on the subject of WWI and its memorialisation and commemoration - as this remains the focus of this thesis - it is clear that the interest in this conflict remains strong and has not yet diminished in most of the major combatant nations. A list of general books

⁴² Turner, C. (2006), p. 210.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴⁴ Ashplant, T.G., Dawson, G., and Roper, M. (eds.) (2000) *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (1st ed.). Routledge.

⁴⁵ Lunn, K. (2006) War Memorialisation and Public Heritage in Southeast Asia: Some Case Studies and Comparative Reflections. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 13 (1), pp. 81–95.

⁴⁶ Seefeldt, K. (2023) Remembering and Forgetting Wars: Memorialization of the Global War on Terrorism in the US. *Current Objectives of Postgraduate American Studies*, 24 (1), pp. 125–146.

mainly on British war memorialisation and commemoration available on the *War Memorials* website⁴⁷, shows that this subject has consistently maintained its relevance over the last few decades. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it offers a snippet of the literature available on war memorials within or linked to the United Kingdom. Some notable mentions are Alex King's "*Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The symbolism and politics of remembrance*" from 1998; Derek Boorman's "*A century of remembrance: One hundred outstanding British war memorials*" from 2005⁴⁸; and Geoffrey Archer's "*The glorious dead: Figurative sculpture of British First World War memorials*" from 2009.

On the other side of the globe, publications related to Anzac Day and WWI memorials in both Australia and New Zealand equally show the continued interest in this subject. Ken Inglis' book "*Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*", first published in 1998 and with the newest paperback edition available in 2005 with additions by Jan Brazier, dedicates a major portion to the Great War and Anzac Day. The book, however, also includes colonial war memorials and memorials from WWII onwards, thereby offering a wider context to Australian war memorialisation.⁴⁹ The chapters on WWI memorials focus on elements such as location and setting, as indicative of the book's title, but also design, such as the 'diggers' statues, and the language used in the epitaphs with "the surrounding text often serving to make the very scale of the conflict a cause for local pride."⁵⁰ More recently, a journal article from Katti Williams on Australian WWI memorials concerns their designs and often complex symbolism and how the designers from the interwar period "chose to express national identity through the medium of commemorative architecture."⁵¹ In a comparative analysis, Ken Inglis and Jock Phillips present a study of war memorials in Australia and New Zealand.⁵² From a New Zealand perspective, Ian McGibbon's books on war memorials erected along the Western

⁴⁷ War Memorial Trust (n.d.) *General books*.

⁴⁸ Boorman has published several other books on British WWI memorials.

⁴⁹ Inglis, K. S., Brazier, J., & American Council of Learned Societies (2005) *Sacred places: War memorials in the Australian landscape*. Melbourne University Press.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

⁵¹ Katti Williams (2021) Clothing the Nation: Representing a Distinctively Australian National Identity in World War I Memorial Architecture. *Australian Historical Studies*, 52 (1), pp. 79-105.

⁵² Inglis, K. S. and Phillips, J. (1991) War memorials in Australia and New Zealand: A comparative survey. *Australian Historical Studies*, 24 (96), pp. 179–191.

Front⁵³ and at Gallipoli⁵⁴, from 2001 and 2014 respectively, demonstrate the Great War's maintained relevance for this nation.

On a more international comparative level, different studies on WWI memorials have also been published during or post the centenary. Marco Borghi analyses and contrasts WWI memorials, both local and national, and collective memory of three major players, namely France, Germany and the United Kingdom. In his paper, Borghi assesses how different WWI memorials have played a role in building and contributing to national collective memories of the war in these three nations.⁵⁵ Borghi concludes that in contrast to the United Kingdom and France, in Germany it is the memory of WWII that has

“[...] taken over a large share of both the urban identity of German cities and the population's memory. Consequently, war memorials have had a more limited effect in Germany on popular consciousness compared to France and Britain, clearly shown by the quiet and low-key public commemorations and the significantly lower number of visitors to German World War I memorials.”⁵⁶

Heather Jones posits that few areas of historical research can have regenerated themselves as successfully as WWI studies in the last thirty odd years. Since the 1990s, the war's historiography has experienced a transformation by embracing new disciplines, along with comparative and transnational approaches.⁵⁷ Yet, what becomes evident by reviewing the available literature on how WWI has been memorialised and commemorated, is a lack of detailed studies concerning eastern and south-eastern European countries⁵⁸, many of which gained independence from the Ottoman or Austro-Hungarian empires after 1918. The same can be observed for nations considered neutral but still involved in WWI. This highlights that studies on WWI remembrance generally tend to focus on the major combatant nations. According to Jones, another area that promises insightful studies is how WWI memorialisation and commemoration has shaped

⁵³ McGibbon, I. C. (2001) *New Zealand Battlefields and Memorials of the Western Front*. Auckland: Oxford University Press in association with the History Group, Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

⁵⁴ McGibbon, I. C. (2004) *Gallipoli: A Guide to New Zealand Battlefields and Memorials*. Auckland: Reed Publishing in association with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

⁵⁵ Borghi, M. (2021) On War and Memory: First World War memorials and collective memory in Britain, France and Germany. *National Identities*, 23 (5), pp. 555-571.

⁵⁶ Borghi, M., p. 567.

⁵⁷ Jones, H. (2013) As the Centenary Approaches: The Regeneration of First World War Historiography. *The Historical Journal*, 56 (3), pp. 857-858.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 877-878.

attitudes and decision-making during WWII and how it influenced National Socialism, with only limited research undertaken thus far.⁵⁹ In all, as pointed out by Jones in her historiographical review of WWI from 2013, when it comes to WWI studies, in particular its remembrance, much more work is still to be done.⁶⁰

Evidently, the centenary marked a surge of new publications alongside increased public interest. Many of these publications focused on the centenary itself or its preparations. Concerning the United Kingdom, which comprises four separate nations, several articles were published examining the differences and similarities regarding WWI remembrance and the centenary across these nations. Andrew Mycock, for example, raises the question if the centenary can be called a truly national commemoration taking into consideration the differences between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.⁶¹ This can be seen as a response to the British government's plan and former Prime Minister David Cameron's speech in 2012 calling for a national commemoration, both being the centre of critique from many newspaper articles, political parties and historians during that time, as also underlined in articles by Heather Jones⁶² or Emma Hanna⁶³. Various publications also indicate that the centenary presents a new opportunity to conduct further research into new or contested subjects (see 2.4 for more details and examples). As remarked by Catriona Pennell⁶⁴, Gary Sheffield⁶⁵, and also Martin Bayer⁶⁶, the WWI centenary can thus be viewed as a serious educational opportunity, and for historians and the public alike to engage with the most recent research on this era, as also observed in the case of Luxembourg.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Note: Jones mentions, for example, important work written and edited by Gerd Krumeich.

⁶⁰ Jones, H. (2013), p. 878.

⁶¹ Mycock, A. (2014) The First World War Centenary in the UK: "A truly national commemoration"? *The Round Table*, 103 (2), pp. 153-163.

⁶² Jones, H. (2014) Goodbye to all that?: Memory and meaning in the commemoration of the First World War. *Juncture*, 20 (4), pp. 287-291.

⁶³ Hanna, E. (2014) Contemporary Britain and the Memory of the First World War. *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, 113 – 114 (1), pp. 110-117.

⁶⁴ Pennell, C. (2012) Popular history and myth-making: The role and responsibility of First World War historians in the centenary commemorations, 2014-2018. *Historically Speaking*, 13 (5), pp. 11-14.

⁶⁵ Sheffield, G. (2014) A Once in a Century Opportunity? Some Personal Reflections on the Centenary of the First World War. *British Journal for Military History*, 1 (1), pp. 1-11.

⁶⁶ Bayer, M. (2015) Commemoration in Germany: Rediscovering history. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 50 (3), pp. 553-561.

Chapter 2 War memorialisation: History and historiography

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter expands on the initial short historiographical review from Chapter 1, providing a wider context and framework for war memorialisation and corresponding studies. To do this, this chapter first presents a short history of war memorials with examples from different countries, and how the memorialisation of WWI marked an important shift. Particular attention is paid to the political dimension as this is an integral part of war memorials and how this might impact the narrative, or even myth-building, what the memorial is meant to represent and symbolise, while being susceptible to change over time. Although the political cannot be fully separated from war memorials, other meanings and messages that are conveyed through war memorials, such as grief, are also addressed, drawing from existing studies that go beyond the political dimension. This further includes counter-monuments, contested memorials and memories as well as marginalised groups.

Further, the various influences and motivations for war memorialisation are discussed with an emphasis on how a nation's role, experience of and involvement in any war, and the notion of nation and nation-building can play a crucial role in war memorialisation. These all can have an influence on which narrative is conveyed through war memorials. This then demonstrates the importance of acknowledging war memorials as powerful and insightful resources and tools for historians and other scholars.

2.2 From the long nineteenth century to the interbellum

War memorials have a long-standing history and tradition, constructed by different nations and cultures to commemorate battles, wars, casualties, and their leaders. They are often considered one of the most ubiquitous types of

memorials and monuments.⁶⁷ Especially within Europe, war memorials in the form of grand monuments have occupied a central role in the history of architecture and public sculpture. The long nineteenth century saw the construction of numerous war memorials as important symbols of national pride within most major cities of combatant nations. Generally speaking, many of these early memorials had an affirmative, celebratory, or even heroic, religious, and political character. They were often monumental in every aspect, considering their grand size, their location at significant public spaces for everyone to marvel at, and the message they conveyed. With some exceptions, most of these earlier war memorials were dedicated to a single military and affluent person rather than to all the war dead claimed by a battle or war.⁶⁸

The *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris - its name already indicative of its message and meaning - celebrates Napoléon's triumph at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805. Meanwhile, the colossal *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* in Leipzig remembers the victory over Napoléon at the so-called Battle of the Nations in 1813. Both are powerful examples of how war memorials operated at the nexus of politics and culture, and were symbolic assertions of historically grounded power, as argued by Bill Niven.⁶⁹ Similarly, *Nelson's Column* in Trafalgar Square in London not only remembers Horatio Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 - the battle also giving this square its name - but the column's design and symbolism, and in conjunction with the other martial statues within Trafalgar Square, portrays "[...] a strong message of imperial power and reach, a unified narrative typical of the mid-nineteenth century in both theme and form"⁷⁰, according to Shanti Sumartojo.

Many war memorials of the long nineteenth century in Europe thus served to express and ground the authority of triumphant nations or leaders, representing and consolidating official power through figurative, allegorical, and abstract

⁶⁷ Niven, B. (2007) War memorials at the intersection of politics, culture and memory. *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, 1 (1), p. 39; Aldrich, R. (2004) *Vestiges of Colonial Empire in France*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, p. 105.

⁶⁸ Niven, B. (2007), p. 39; Turner, C. (2006), p. 209; Winter, J. (1995) *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 79; Hunt, N. C. (2010) *Memory, War and Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 175.

⁶⁹ Niven, B. (2007), p. 39.

⁷⁰ Sumartojo, S. (2015) National identity and commemorative space: Connections to the nation through time and site. *Landscape Review*, 15 (2), p. 13.

spatial elements. Their placement at strategic public areas was purposefully planned and designed to embody the centrality of a message often tailored to the political interest of the leaders who had waged the war being chiselled and memorialised in stone.⁷¹

Despite these well-known earlier examples, it was WWI that marked a significant shift in terms of war memorialisation and commemoration, which Nigel Hunt calls the probably “largest scale memorialisation and commemoration in the world”.⁷² This is evident by the sheer number of war memorials erected after or even during WWI to the point that most war memorials that dot the urban and rural landscape, at least within Europe, date from WWI or later. In France and the United Kingdom, virtually every city, town, village, and parish saw the construction of local war memorials of any type, listing the names of their lost generation irrespective of rank. In northern France or Flanders, the war memorials and cemeteries have even become an integral part of the landscape. In the United Kingdom, it is estimated that fewer than 30 villages, the so-called ‘thankful villages’ which had no deaths to mourn, do not have a war memorial.⁷³ There are even cases of abandoned villages, such as Haywood in Scotland, where the local war memorial is still present even long after the last residents have left. The War Memorials Register (WMR), which is the most comprehensive register of over 100,000 war memorials and names of the individuals they commemorate of the United Kingdom, including Channel Islands and Isle of Man, from the Roman occupation onwards, counts just over 68,000 records for WWI memorials.⁷⁴

Apart from the quantitative side, WWI also marked a shift in trends, meanings, functions, and attitudes with regards to war memorials. Impressive and monumental war memorials like those of the previous century were still constructed, such as the *Menin Gate Memorial* in Flanders or the *Thiepval Memorial* near the Somme. However, smaller and more modest memorials started to increasingly emerge. Whatever the size, these WWI memorials

⁷¹ Sumartojo, S. (2015), p. 7; Niven, B. (2007), p. 39; pp. 43-44.

⁷² Hunt, N. C. (2010), p. 175.

⁷³ Hunt, N. C. (2010), pp. 172-175; Winter, J. (1995), p. 1.

⁷⁴ Current number on the official website of Imperial War Museum website; also see Furlong, J., Knight, L. and Slocombe, S. (2002) “They shall grow not old”: An analysis of trends in memorialisation based on information held by the UK national inventory of war memorials. *Cultural Trends*, 12 (45), pp. 1-42.

became the locus of national and local commemoration and grief. Often irrespective of victory or defeat, the main focus was on human loss and mourning considering the sheer scale of casualties, which for the vast majority were ordinary citizens who had either volunteered or were conscripted rather than professional soldiers.⁷⁵ Similarly, Jay Winter emphasises a certain absence of hatred, or triumph, or even worship of the military in many war memorials post 1918 - although there are notable exceptions which will be discussed below. Instead, war memorials embodied the loss and grief experienced by millions, with ample evidence of commemorative ceremonies as moments of collective bereavement.⁷⁶

As noted by Niven, representative of the shift from the political leaders and self-aggrandisement of the military to the civilians who fought and died on the fronts can further be seen in the need for a grave to the unknown soldier in almost every combatant country.⁷⁷ The tomb of the unknown soldier, sometimes referred to as unknown warrior, represents a powerful symbolic placeholder for all those missing, unidentified and with no known grave.⁷⁸ This was also of particular importance for countries that had decided against the repatriation of their war dead for various reasons. For example, the British ruled out repatriation on grounds of expense but also equality as only those with known graves would have the privilege of being returned home, thereby discriminating against those with no known grave. This also impacted those much further away in the commonwealth and dominions, such as Canada or New Zealand. Germany on the other hand was in no position to return to the former fronts in order to exhume its fallen soldiers and transport them back home.⁷⁹

The political dimension did however not disappear with the emergence of the thousands of WWI memorials with their dominant focus on grief and loss. A prominent example is a certain type of WWI memorial in Germany dating from the interbellum, the so-called *Kriegerdenkmal*. This type of war memorial, with

⁷⁵ Niven, B. (2007), pp. 39-40.

⁷⁶ Winter, J. (1995), p. 98.

⁷⁷ Niven, B. (2007), p. 40.

⁷⁸ Kolnberger, T. and Kmec, S. (2022) Transnational Soldiering, Burial and Commemoration across Borders: The Case of Luxembourgers in the French Foreign Legion. *FRANCIA: Forschungen zur Westeuropäischen Geschichte*, Band 49, p. 321.

⁷⁹ Winter, J. (1995), p. 27.

a focus on the warriors, dates back to the early nineteenth century and carries a political function which got amplified even more after WWI within Germany.⁸⁰ As noted by Martin Schneider, after 1918, reactions in Germany varied from sadness and grief to the traumatic experiences faced at the fronts, to anger at the defeat and the imposed sole acceptance of the war guilt as dictated by the Treaty of Versailles. The latter was especially dominant during the rise of National Socialism. These varying responses led to two distinct representations of the memory of 1914-1918 in Germany: memorials that expressed bereavement, mourning and the brutal realities of war, exemplified by the works of Käthe Kollwitz; and memorials, the *Kriegerdenkmäler*, that glorified the war and sacralised the brave soldiers who sacrificed themselves for the *Vaterland*, serving as role models for the generations to come. The *Kriegerdenkmäler* conveyed the idea that their deaths were not in vain, but rather fulfilled a greater purpose worth dying for - a sentiment that was already embodied in memorials erected after the victory over France in 1871.⁸¹ This latter category of war memorials, such as the *76er-Denkmal* in Hamburg, was nothing short of myth-building and propaganda, commissioned by revanchist political circles before 1933, and later promoted by the Nazi regime. Any memorial that did not conform with their idealised image of the war or did not fit into the Nazi propaganda was often completely or partially destroyed. These German WWI memorials were thus politically charged manifestations in the public sphere, as remarked by Schneider.⁸²

Nonetheless, in other countries WWI memorials cannot be seen as politically neutral either. Winter comments that war remembrance was a political act, and memorials carried political messages from the earliest days of the war.⁸³ Likewise, Bill Niven agrees that war memorials dedicated to WWI, and later conflicts of the twentieth century, became focal points for collective expressions of grief; however, the ritualisation involved was rarely quite free of political significance and connotations. More often than not, the inauguration of the war memorial and commemorative rituals involved politicians and other

⁸⁰ Schinke, H. (2016) ›Steine des Anstosses‹ Zum Konfliktpotenzial gealterter Kriegerdenkmäler am Beispiel des ›76er-Denkmal‹ in Hamburg. *Hamburger Journal für Kulturanthropologie (HJK)*, 4, pp. 21-22.

⁸¹ Schneider, M. (2016) Zur Auseinandersetzung mit Kriegerdenkmälern des Ersten Weltkriegs - eine Einleitung. *Hamburger Journal für Kulturanthropologie (HJK)*, 4, pp. 10-12; Schinke, H. (2016), pp. 21-22.

⁸² Schneider, M. (2016), pp. 10-12.

⁸³ Winter, J. (1995), p. 82.

important officials, with the structure, contents and execution of these events often mirroring political interests.⁸⁴ All in all, Niven suggests that “the cultural significance of memorials as reminders of past wars has always been simultaneously a political one”.⁸⁵

2.3 Looking beyond the political

Given the strong political undertones attached to war memorials as noted above, a prominent focus within the literature on war memorials and memorialisation studies, especially in the early years, remains therefore on these political aspects. The political dimension is ever present and should neither be overlooked or ignored, as will also be apparent throughout my thesis and the chosen case studies.

Accordingly, in 1988, James Mayo wrote about war memorials as political memory, suggesting that when wars and conflicts are commemorated through memorials, political landscapes are created.⁸⁶ Mayo argues that

“[...] war memorials in the landscape partially reflect a nation's political history. Commemoration through war memorials mirrors not only what a society wants to remember but also what it wishes to forget. War memory as sacred commemoration enhances national image; neglect defames it. In either case, memorials address a country's political history.”⁸⁷

The political dimension of war memorials is consequently one of the key aspects addressed by many scholars writing on war memorialisation. Even though the political notions cannot be overlooked, the questions and themes that war memorials can provoke go beyond the political. This dominant spotlight on the political dimension of war memorials was for instance also highlighted by Emma Login in her 2014 PhD thesis “*Set in stone?: war memorialisation as a long-term and continuing process in the UK, France and the USA*”. In summary, Login's thesis studies the chronological evolution of the war memorialisation process by comparing examples from the aforementioned countries, ranging from the mid-

⁸⁴ Niven, B. (2007), pp. 40-43.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁸⁶ Mayo, J. (1988) War memorials as political memory. *Geographical Review*, 78, pp. 62-63.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

nineteenth century to present day, to prove that war memorials are part of an ongoing tradition of memorialisation. Login's research and thesis thus takes on a much wider and comparative approach to war memorialisation over a longer period of time.⁸⁸

Login also applied a biographical approach to war memorials, thereby not just considering the war memorial at one specific moment in time or only immediately after its inauguration, but examining the memorial throughout its full lifespan, from initial idea to present condition, taking note of all the changes throughout the memorial's life. According to Login, such a biographical approach to war memorials, wherein the memorial as an object is centralised, is needed for a comprehensive understanding of the levels of engagement that take place.⁸⁹

The concept of this biographical approach to war memorials was already explored by James E. Young in 1989 by studying the biography of Nathan Rapoport's *Warsaw Ghetto Monument*, highlighting that studies of memorials and monuments should not just focus on the aesthetic or historical aspects or, as in other cases, on the political. Young argues that "[w]e might ask not only how the monument reflects past history but, most important, what role it now plays in current history."⁹⁰ Thus, in order to learn about the current history and state of any memorial, a wider biographical approach is needed (see Chapter 3 for more details).

As aforementioned, the notion of grief is a further aspect of war memorials. First published in 1995, Jay Winter's "*Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*" also moved away from the sole political aspects of war memorials. As the title of the book indicates, Winter's discussion concentrates on the universal problem of grief and mourning as well as its social expression, which all countries touched by WWI experienced. Although Winter took on a more comparative approach, he predominantly draws his examples from the UK, France, and Germany.⁹¹ With

⁸⁸ Login, E. L. (2014) *Set in Stone?: War Memorialisation as a Long-Term and Continuing Process in the UK, France and the USA*. University of Birmingham. Ph.D. Oxford: Archaeopress, pp. 7-8; p. 385.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 77-78.

⁹⁰ Young, J. E. (1989) The Biography of a Memorial Icon: Nathan Rapoport's Warsaw Ghetto Monument. *Representations*, 26, p. 69.

⁹¹ Winter, J. (1995), pp. 223-224.

previous studies discussing and analysing war memorials as carriers of political ideas, be that nationalism, imperialism, or even fascism, or the multiple justifications of the call to arms, or interest in these artefacts as public sculpture, Winter concentrated on war memorials as foci of the rituals, rhetoric, and ceremonies of bereavement.⁹² Consequently, Winter notes that war memorials

“[...] embody and proclaim a host of commemorative messages about war, they do not obliterate the simple truth that people die in war, and in the Great War their number was legion. That message may be direct; it may be indirect or muted; it may be drowned in sentimentality or lies, but between the lines of noble rhetoric, through the mass of figurative or sculptural detail, the harsh history of life and death in wartime is frozen in public monuments throughout Europe and beyond.”⁹³

Staying within the political domain, but taking on a different approach and study subjects, various publications and studies in recent years have explored the so-called counter-monuments, or anti-monuments, which allow memorialisation and commemoration of more complex or tragic past events such as genocides. Important work on counter-monuments and counter-memory especially in relation to the Holocaust has, for instance, been carried out by aforementioned James E. Young.⁹⁴ These relatively modern, abstract, and often temporary memorials have been described as new and critical mode of commemorative practice.⁹⁵ As noted in a study by Quentin Stevens, Karen A. Franck and Ruth Fazakerley, many counter-monument projects were designed and constructed to put existing historical monuments into perspective and to counter the message and values they convey, or even adopt anti-monumental strategies. They illustrate examples from various countries and by referring to different conflicts and tragic events they discuss themes such as subject, form, site, visitor experience and meaning of these counter-monuments.⁹⁶ Likewise, Natalia Krzyżanowska comments that the counter-monuments “can be seen as contemporary artists’ reaction to not only the discourse of place/space identity

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁹⁴ See for example: Young, J. E. (1999) Memory and counter-memory. *Harvard Design Magazine*, 9 (Fall); or Young, J. E. (1992). The counter-monument: Memory against itself in Germany today. *Critical Inquiry*, 18 (2), pp. 267-296.

⁹⁵ Stevens, Q., Franck, K.A. and Fazakerley, R. (2018) Counter-monuments: the anti-monumental and the dialogic. *The Journal of Architecture*, 23 (5), p. 718.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 718.

but also to the localised politics of individual experience and of dealing with often ‘inconvenient’ memories.”⁹⁷

In relation to monuments and counter-monuments, or *Denkmal* and *Gegendenkmal* in German, Jana Scheele focuses on the public places at which memorials were erected and their spatial representations. Taking two German WWI *Kriegerdenkmäler* in Hamburg and their corresponding counter-monuments as example, Scheele examines how space influences the creation of meaning and social sensitivities, and how these aspects change over time.⁹⁸ In both cases, it was decided to preserve the history of the place, to respect the memory of previous generations by keeping the WWI memorials, even if the new generation might not recognise these memorials as coherent with their own reality and values. However, they equally made their own statement by installing a counter-monument within the same space. Consequently, both monument and counter-monument now co-exist in the same space, which thereby also contains the materialised memory perspective of the different generations, as noted by Scheele. Through this, the space is no longer characterised by one single but multiple statements and meanings. The proximity of monument and counter-monument also facilitates dialogue among generations, allowing them to engage with one another within that shared space.⁹⁹

Contested war memorials that embody controversial themes, or memories and dominant narratives that have been challenged, have also become the focus of scholarly work on war memorialisation. Prominent examples of this are the fascist and still operative memorial *Valley of the Fallen* in Spain, housing the remains of Francisco Franco¹⁰⁰, or even the issues and debates around the *Yasukuni Shrine* in Japan, commemorating those who died in service but also convicted war criminals.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Krzyżanowska, N. (2016) The discourse of counter-monuments: semiotics of material commemoration in contemporary urban spaces. *Social Semiotics*, 26 (5), p. 466.

⁹⁸ Scheele, J. (2016) Denkmal und Gegendenkmal. Kommunikationsraum der Generationen. *Hamburger Journal für Kulturanthropologie (HJK)*, 4, pp. 73-74.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.77-78, p. 84.

¹⁰⁰ See for example: González-Ruibal, A. (2022) Excavating Europe's last fascist monument: The Valley of the Fallen (Spain). *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 22 (1), pp. 26-47.

¹⁰¹ See for example: Mochizuki, M.M. (2010) The Yasukuni Shrine Conundrum: Japan's Contested Identity and Memory. In: M. Kim and B. Schwartz (eds.) *Northeast Asia's Difficult Past*. London: Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, pp. 31-52.

In a special issue of the journal *Historical Encounters* from 2021, different articles explore the engagement of war memorials with the contested nature of public sculpture and remembrance across historical, aesthetic and artistic, as well as sociopolitical contexts. A key emphasis is placed on the designs of war memorials, and their impact, contribution and relevance in contemporary society. The examples include Australian war memorials featuring conventional symbolism aligned with the conservative ideological and aesthetic framework and norms of the interbellum, but also WWI memorials from Europe.¹⁰² These are then also contrasted with more modern war memorial designs, especially the more abstract counter-memorials that invite personal interpretations and reflections from viewers, and even transforming the viewers into participants.¹⁰³ In other words, many contemporary war memorials “engage viewers mentally and sensually and seek to affect change by inviting them to think rather than dictating what to think [...]”.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, the special issue addresses the representation of marginalised groups or forgotten victims that have often been overlooked in mainstream historical documentation, as well as memorialisation and commemorative practices¹⁰⁵ such as Marco Dräger’s contribution “*Monuments for deserters: A particularity of German memory culture*”.

The rather controversial subject of those executed for cowardice and desertion during WWI has garnered attention in academic discourse in recent years. The *Shot at Dawn Memorial* at the UK’s National Memorial Arboretum has, for example, been the focal point of Alasdair Brooks’ article from 2022.¹⁰⁶ The *Shot at Dawn Memorial* is a relatively new WWI memorial, inaugurated in 2001. It commemorates 306 British and Commonwealth soldiers executed on the grounds of cowardice and desertion. However, many of these cases are much more complex and ambiguous, as many of the executed individuals had suffered from shellshock; a concept not yet widely understood and researched at that time. Brooks’ points out the memorial’s equally complex location at the Arboretum, referring to it as ‘near invisible’ within the memorial landscape due to being

¹⁰² Kerby, M., Baguley, M., Bedford, A., and Gehrman, R. (2021) If these stones could speak: War memorials and contested memory. *Historical Encounters*, 8 (1), pp. 1-12.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1; p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Brooks, A. (2022) Shot at dawn: Memorializing First World War executions for cowardice in the landscape of the UK’s National Memorial Arboretum. *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 56 (1), pp. 28-42.

situated outside the main area towards the eastern boundary. On the other hand, the memorial is very visible in site interpretation, guidebook and site map.¹⁰⁷ Apart from its location, Brooks comments on its juxtaposition to the other memorials within the Arboretum, both in the physical and symbolic sense, noting that “[t]his is a memorial to individuals executed for cowardice and desertion within a ceremonial landscape that largely commemorates military service and bravery.”¹⁰⁸

Regarding marginalised groups, another important contribution to the scholarship of WWI remembrance is “*Minorities and the First World War: From War to Peace*” edited by Hannah Ewence and Tim Grady. One section of this publication concerns remembering and forgetting different ethnic, national and religious minority groups in wartime. Examples are given for the United Kingdom and also Germany, both with very diverse armies including soldiers from overseas dominions or former territorial interests in Eastern Europe respectively, where minorities might have featured within public remembrance of WWI and memory cultures, although remained a rather weak presence. In the case of Germany, Grady notes that it was the Poles, Alsations and Danes that remained at the margins of memorialisation and commemoration despite having died in the war while serving in the Imperial German Army.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Grady refers to the omission of Jewish victims’ names on a number of memorials amidst growing antisemitism in Germany. Nevertheless, Grady points out that antisemitism was also present in British war remembrance activities, albeit to a lesser extent.¹¹⁰ Grady concludes that “[...] it was not just the diversity of the respective militaries that evaporated at the war’s end; it was also the breadth of the two countries’ memory cultures that declined.”¹¹¹

Moreover, there has been significant interest in the geographical dimensions of public memory, memorialisation, and commemoration, and their spatial and material dimensions in recent years. Nuala Johnson argues that even though

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-36.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁹ Grady, T. (2017) Selective Remembering: Minorities and the Remembrance of the First World War in Britain and Germany. In: H. Ewence and T. Grady (eds.) *Minorities and the First World War*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, p 254; 261.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 266

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 273

memorials are generally placed within the public domain, geographers have for a long time underutilised monuments as a means for conceptualising the nation-building process.¹¹² Johnson emphasises the usefulness of public monuments - which could thus also be extended to other types of memorials - drawing attention to their location and how it can reveal “the ways in which monuments serve as the focal point for the expression of social action and a collectivist politics.”¹¹³ Similarly, Johnson notes how “the iconography of statues exposes how class, ‘race’, and gender differences are negotiated in public space.”¹¹⁴

In relation to geographical dimensions of public memory and spatial connections, commemorative street names are also of particular interest, with publications by Maoz Azaryahu (also in collaboration with Kenneth E. Foote).¹¹⁵ Similarly, Mark Connelly and Stefan Goebel explore the so-called ‘Langemarck Myth’¹¹⁶ set between cultural oblivion and critical memory with focus on streets bearing the name *Langemarckstraße*, while also drawing attention to other WWI commemorative street names in Germany.¹¹⁷ Just as memorials, street names are vehicles of commemoration with political undertones, but unlike more conventional memorials they have a utilitarian function and belong to the realm of language. Through their nomination and additional inscriptions, street names introduce an official version of the past into everyday life, with many inhabitants of that street or by-passers often not even taking much notice of them, their meaning and their spatial connection to other streets or memorials.¹¹⁸ Chapter 5 will explore the concept of street names as form of memorialisation and commemoration in more detail.

What becomes apparent from the themes, approaches and examples listed above, is not just a dominance of the political dimensions - from which a

¹¹² Johnson, N. (1995) Cast in Stone: Monuments, Geography, and Nationalism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 13 (1), pp. 51-52.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹¹⁵ See for example Azaryahu, M. (1996) The Power of Commemorative Street Names. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 14 (3), pp. 311-330; see also Foote, K. E., and Azaryahu, M. (2007).

¹¹⁶ Refers to a battle near Belgian town Langemarck close to Ypres on 10th November 1914 where German soldiers are said to have run bravely into battle while singing the *Deutschlandlied*, symbolising the heroic sacrifice of young soldiers. The legend, or myth, glorifies this battle which ended unsuccessfully and with heavy losses for the Germans.

¹¹⁷ Connelly, M. and Goebel, S. P. (2022) Forgetting the Great War? The Langemarck Myth between cultural oblivion and critical memory in (West) Germany, 1945-2014. *Journal of Modern History*, 94 (1). pp. 1-41.

¹¹⁸ Foote, K. E., and Azaryahu, M. (2007), p. 128.

memorial cannot be separated - but also a strong focus on bigger nations, such as the UK, Australia, or Germany. Certainly, war memorialisation studies have also included smaller nations such as for example Estonia or Hungary¹¹⁹, or from a different perspective such as the aforementioned study on Southeast Asia. Yet, Luxembourg's war memorials, especially those commemorating WWI, have received little to no attention, both nationally and internationally, for which this thesis aims to set a ground base.

2.4 Influences and motivations

With military engagements and fighting occurring within Europe, the Middle East, parts of Asia and Africa, even reaching into the oceans, with supplies and soldiers drawn from numerous dominions, territories, commonwealths, and colonies, WWI impacted almost every corner of the world. As the first truly global industrialised war, is WWI remembrance also a global phenomenon or rather a national agenda? This question was raised in an article from 2014 at the beginning of the centenary by Sigrid Van der Auwera and Annick Schramme. They conclude that the memorialisation and commemoration of WWI is a historic and social construct, similar to other expressions of heritage, with considerable variations in how this war has been or is still being remembered in different countries. Aside from other cultural considerations, there are various factors that can play a role, which their study addresses.¹²⁰

Their study explores the specific national sensitivities that contribute to the memorialisation and commemoration of WWI as well as the reasons as to why war remembrance is more or less prevalent in some nations. Given that not all the nations experienced WWI in like manner, it is only natural that the memorialisation and commemoration thereof equally differs. Drawing from an array of data from different nations through desk-based assessment and interviews to analyse how and to which extent the war has been remembered, Van der Auwera and Schramme are able to provide some general conclusions

¹¹⁹ See for example Wilson, P. (2015) Monumental Indifference in Tallinn. *Public Art Dialogue*, 5 (2), pp. 170-190; see also Foote, K. E., Tóth, A., and Árvay, A. (2000) Hungary after 1989: Inscribing a new past on place. *Geographical Review*, 90 (3), pp. 301-334.

¹²⁰ Van der Auwera, S. and Schramme, A. (2014) Commemoration of the Great War: A Global Phenomenon or a National Agenda? *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 9 (1), pp. 3-15.

about the varying factors regarding influences and motivations.¹²¹ Although their study, the questions raised, aspects considered and conclusions discussed all concern WWI, it can be argued that most factors outlined below which influence the significance given to war remembrance could be applied to any other conflict.

The different factors that can determine the importance of memorialisation and commemoration are perhaps not definitive, and should also not be considered independently as they can overlap, as pointed out by Van der Auwera and Schramme, but they draw attention to the following factors: the specific history of a nation's participation in a conflict, the extent that this conflict contributed to the nation-building efforts, the extent to which a military tradition exists, whether it is institutionalised and the extent to which war remembrance is a civil event. An increased interest in public history and turning remembrance of a war into a contemporary peace message are also discussed.¹²² Some of these factors will be considered in more detail below, in each case including examples from different countries supported by other secondary literature and studies. These factors will then be revisited throughout this thesis in relation to Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI.

The specific history of a nation's experience of and involvement in a conflict is paramount in how and to what extent a nation and its people decided to memorialise and commemorate it, thereby also impacting collective memory and collective remembrance. Additionally, the outcome of a war, meaning whether a nation won or lost, also needs to be taken into consideration. War remembrance is generally more vibrant and elaborated in nations that won. On the opposite side, a lack of remembrance and even a certain collective amnesia can be detected in nations that lost, because defeat does not usually fit into the national narrative.¹²³ Likewise, a neutral country with little to no involvement in a conflict, and which therefore neither won nor lost, will also put a different emphasis, if any, on its remembrance. Van der Auwera and Schramme give the example of Spain, which apart from some Catalan volunteers, had no further

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-15.

¹²² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-15.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 6

direct experience of or involvement in WWI and consequently the memorialisation and commemoration is basically non-existent.¹²⁴

The link between a nation's participation in a conflict, its outcome and its subsequent memorialisation and commemoration is apparent when comparing how nations within the former Entente Powers and Central Powers view and remember WWI. But even amongst the nations that count themselves amongst the victors, there are differences which in turn relate again to the extent of their participation. The United States entered WWI relatively late, in 1917, and even though they were on the side of the victors, it is still WWII that was more decisive from a US perspective and thus takes precedence.¹²⁵ This is very different to the UK who participated in the war for the full duration with countless casualties. WWI has been memorialised and commemorated more than any other conflict in the UK¹²⁶ to the point that Dan Todman even argues that the British public is somewhat obsessed by this war.¹²⁷

Germany was equally involved in the war for the full four years suffering an extreme high number of human losses. Nevertheless, being defeated, forced to accept full responsibility and carry the war guilt - which is still subject of much debate - the remembrance of WWI is understandably far less dominant in Germany.¹²⁸ In many parts of Germany the 11th November is not associated with Armistice Day or Remembrance Sunday but with the beginning of carnival season. As noted by Martin Bayer, Germany never developed a common narrative of this war, neither after WWI nor WWII, with Germany's Nazi past and the Holocaust continuing to this day to overshadow any other historical event.¹²⁹

There is also a connection between nation, memories, and remembrance. Nationalism, the way a conflict contributed to national awareness and in like manner to nation-building, can play a crucial role in memorialisation and

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹²⁶ Hanna, E. (2009) An Unhealed Wound: Britain and the First World War. In: *The Great War on the Small Screen: Representing the First World War in Contemporary Britain*. Edinburgh University Press, p. 7.

¹²⁷ Todman, D. (2012) How we remember them: the 1914-18 war today. *World War One Centenary: Continuations and Beginnings* (University of Oxford / JISC).

¹²⁸ Van der Auwera, S. and Schramme, A. (2014), p. 6.

¹²⁹ Bayer, M. (2015) Commemoration in Germany: Rediscovering history. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 50 (3), p. 559.

commemoration, which in turn can then play a pivotal role in the construction of identity. If a conflict paved the way to, regained, or reinforced independence, its remembrance is often more active and present. Celebrations of a shared history carry much more weight for these nations.¹³⁰ This also aligns with Charles Turner's definition of commemoration (1.4) which is associated with all those devices that are intended to create or sustain a sense of belonging, and therefore nationalism.¹³¹

This can be seen in the example of Australia and New Zealand. Even though at the time of WWI, both Australia and New Zealand were still part of the British Empire, the memory of WWI and in particular the Gallipoli Landings on 25th April 1915 still hold significant importance and weight in these two nations. The Gallipoli legacy and Anzac¹³² legend or myth became a foundational narrative and expression of national identity.¹³³ This importance is even evident in the fact that Anzac is an official and protected term in both Australia and New Zealand, and Anzac Day even declared a public holiday.¹³⁴ Simultaneously, and despite counting among the victors of WWI, the example of Anzac, and its commemorative events held since 1916, is a poignant exception to the general assumption that war remembrance is primarily linked to victory.

Writing about the significance of Anzac in Australia and how it shaped the nation, Marilyn Lake comments that even though Australia was forged in a series of peaceful conferences and conventions before the war, having enjoyed high international profile as a one of the first progressive democracies, and without a war of independence from the British Empire, it seemed that there was still something missing from Australia's origin story. Many consider Gallipoli as the moment the nation was forged. Yet, as Gallipoli was a military defeat for the Allies and Anzac Day was seen as a sombre event for a long time, "much heavy

¹³⁰ Van der Auwera, S. and Schramme, A. (2014), p. 6.

¹³¹ Turner, C. (2016), p. 206.

¹³² Derived from ANZAC - Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

¹³³ Beaumont, J. (2016) Commemoration, Cult of the Fallen (Australia). In: U. Daniel et al (eds) *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Issued by Freie Universität Berlin; see also Light, R. (2022) *Anzac Nations: The legacy of Gallipoli in New Zealand and Australia, 1965–2015*. Dunedin: Otago University Press.

¹³⁴ New Zealand Government (2021) *Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act 1981*; Australian Government (2022) *Protecting the word 'Anzac'*.

mythologising has been necessary to turn it into a story of national triumph and establish Gallipoli as the site of our national independence”.¹³⁵

During the interwar years, much of this nationalism was positioned within a wider frame of imperial loyalty. After WWII, critiques of Anzac being too militaristic, misogynist, and anachronistic emerged, and by the 1960s and 1970s interest had diminished as the last survivors were dying. Nevertheless, the Anzac legend and spirit prevailed and Anzac Day saw a revival by the 1990s with investment of new federal funding to ensure extensive programs for education and memorialisation. Although all conflicts in which Australians have fought are nowadays being remembered, the Anzac legend and Gallipoli remain at the forefront.¹³⁶ As remarked by Joan Beaumont, the Anzac spirit was invoked “not just in war commemoration but also at sporting events and during natural disasters, as enshrining the qualities of courage, endurance, sacrifice and mateship to which all Australians should aspire”.¹³⁷

There has been considerable debate about the historical accuracy of the Anzac legend, the possible deliberate manipulation of the public by the state or the motives of the elites in promoting the legend, and the refusal to acknowledge Aboriginal dispossession at the same time. Despite a growing disengagement among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, Anzac continues to resonate with many Australians. This is evident by the increased attendance at commemorative events between 1995 and 2015 in Australia but also in Gallipoli, likely also aided by the widespread media coverage.¹³⁸

The importance of Anzac was also something that I personally observed during my three-month stay in New Zealand in 2015, which coincided with the centenary of the Gallipoli Landings, and by attending the dawn service on 25th April 2015. Having whole families getting up before the break of dawn to attend these ceremonies was like nothing I had witnessed before in relation to WWI remembrance services. During my stay in New Zealand, I also had the chance to visit the ground-breaking exhibition “*The Scale of Our War*” at the *Te Papa*

¹³⁵ Lake, M. (2018) *Beyond Anzac: What Really Shaped Our Nation?* *The University of Melbourne*.

¹³⁶ Beaumont, J. (2016); Lake, M. (2018).

¹³⁷ Beaumont, J. (2016).

¹³⁸ Beaumont, J. (2016); Lake, M. (2018).

Museum in Wellington.¹³⁹ This exhibition, which recounts the stories through the eyes and words of eight New Zealanders brought to life on a monumental scale (at 2.4 times the human scale), is still proving a huge attraction for visitors even long after the centenary has ended.¹⁴⁰ The fact that an exhibition initially intended to mark the centenary and planned to close in 2019 has been extended to 25th April 2025 already indicates the success and importance of this impressive exhibition.

Interestingly, despite the name Anzac relating to both Australia and New Zealand, a paradox can be observed. Even though Australians and New Zealanders fought together at Gallipoli, it has been argued that the New Zealand element within Anzac commemorations in Australia seems to have virtually disappeared in the nationalist appropriation of this history.¹⁴¹ As forwarded by Lake, “mythology serves to comfort and console. It simplifies complexity and smooths historical contradiction. But it can also obscure other, important, chapters in our history.”¹⁴² Hence in many cases, elements that strengthen and even legitimise national identity are selected and exaggerated in order to obtain an important place in a nation's collective memory. These elements form the basis for ceremonies and traditions, while simultaneously other elements might be omitted for the same purpose, as noted by Van der Auwera and Schramme.¹⁴³

On the other side of the spectrum, if a nation considers a conflict as a symbol for the ongoing repression and continuation of colonialism, and maybe even as a hinderance to independence, it is understandable that said conflict is not being remembered by its people. This can be observed in Maghreb nations such as Algeria, where French colonial rule continued for many more years. Here, much more weight and importance are given to WWII rather than WWI which is only scarcely memorialised and commemorated. Even though there are some WWI memorials in Algeria, these must be seen within the colonial context.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ See Te Papa Museum of New Zealand (n.d) *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War - Karipori: Te pakanga nui*.

¹⁴⁰ See 2021 press release on Te Papa Museum website.

¹⁴¹ Lake, M. (2018).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Van der Auwera, S. and Schramme, A. (2014), p. 7.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

The extent to which war remembrance has been institutionalised can also be a decisive factor. This institutionalisation of remembrance is for example very evident and present in France where a shared memory of both the suffering but also the heroism of their nation and their WWI soldiers, or *poilus*, exists. Since 1924, the 11th November is a national public holiday in France by law.

Furthermore, a law passed in 1919, which remains in effect to this day, imposed that every commune must construct a war memorial, resulting in 95% of French communes having a memorial dedicated to their *poilus*. The French state provided financial support for this, covering up to 15% of the costs. This level of contribution was contingent upon the choice of designs on offer in a sort of catalogue, offering a limited selection of designs for the war memorials.¹⁴⁵

The above-mentioned influences and motivations for war remembrance show that various factors come into play, some of them overlapping. As will become evident throughout my thesis, when it comes to the memorialisation of WWI in Luxembourg, two factors seem to take precedence: the specific history of a nation's participation in a conflict and the extent that this conflict contributed to the nation-building efforts. However, rather than reflecting Luxembourg's more realistic participation and involvement in WWI, an amended and somewhat exaggerated version is noticeable through different war memorials, drawing attention to convenient events while keeping others in the dark. This then also played into nation-building efforts, or in the case of Luxembourg its efforts to mend relationships with its neighbours, especially France, and thereby also securing its independence. For both cases, myth-building is very apparent through the figures of the *légionnaires*, those Luxembourgers who fought in the *Légion étrangère*.

2.5 War memorials as a resource for historians

“As sites of memory, mourning and ritual, war memorials have multiple and contested meanings and constitute a special class of place at the intersection of sorrow, citizenship and identity.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Krumeich, G. (n.d) Remembrance of the Great War. *Chemins de mémoire*.

¹⁴⁶ Stephens, J. R. (2013) The cultural biography of a Western Australian war memorial. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19 (7), p. 660.

Considering their expressiveness and informative value, and the different influences and motivations outlined above, it is perhaps surprising that war memorials have been ignored by historians for a long time despite being tangible and visible artefacts within the urban or rural landscape. For most of the twentieth century, war memorials did not enjoy much academic attention among historians with only limited literature available.¹⁴⁷ A shift only occurred since the 1980s onwards. The passing of time, moving from living memory into history, but also the emergence of new disciplines and perspectives, have certainly helped to put war memorials on the agenda of historians and other scholars, according to Ken Inglis.¹⁴⁸ Inglis, who has written extensively on war memorials, both within and outside Australia, points out that war memorials have not lost their power to provoke questions. War memorials convey feelings and thoughts of war, nationality, and death. They embody political messages that are waiting to be decoded and interpreted, and their meanings might even change, which are clues to the dynamics of history.¹⁴⁹

This is emphasised by Jay Winter, asserting that war memorials have different meanings in different generations. According to Winter, once the moment of grief has passed and wounds have healed, war memorials might change their importance and meaning. In some cases, other meanings derived from other needs or events may be attached to them, or no meaning at all.¹⁵⁰ Also Bill Niven comments that

“[...] memorials appear to set history in stone, but in fact they may be cultural history’s most vulnerable and adaptable hardware, as capable of updates as a modern computer. This is certainly the case with war memorials. The key to understanding this lies in the fact that memorials stand in, literally, for the political orders that built them.”¹⁵¹

Likewise, Nuala Johnson posits the special significance of war memorials because “they offer insights into the ways in which national cultures conceive of

¹⁴⁷ Inglis, K. S. (1992) War Memorials: Ten Questions for Historians. *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, 167, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-21.

¹⁵⁰ Winter, J. (1995), p. 98; p. 107.

¹⁵¹ Niven, B. (2007), p. 44.

their pasts and mourn the large-scale destruction of life.”¹⁵² In a study of British war memorials by Furlong, Knight and Slocombe in 2002, their value and power as a resource was equally accentuated:

“Memorials effectively constitute primary as well as secondary evidence of how nations react to large-scale losses and the way in which they choose to commemorate their casualties: primary in terms of a literal recording of how many died; secondary in terms of people's reaction to that loss and how they chose memorials which best reflected their feelings. When memorials were erected, it was broadly considered that they would be cared for indefinitely and act as a reminder to future generations of the cost of war, but their evolution shows how people's attitudes and priorities have changed.”¹⁵³

Therefore, when viewing war memorials not just as mute, passive, and static features within a landscape, but taking the time to observe and analyse them, they can function as artefacts or documents, telling researchers much more than what is on the surface, and open up whole new avenues of projects and studies.

In essence, war memorials are products created by humans, designed with a specific intention and purpose in mind. Robin Wagner-Pacifini and Barry Schwartz underline that war memorials are not self-created but

“[...] conceived and built by those who wish to bring to consciousness the events and people that others are inclined to forget. To understand memorial making in this way is to understand it as a construction process wherein competing ‘moral entrepreneurs’ seek public arenas and support for their interpretations of the past. These interpretations are embodied in the memorial's symbolic structure.”¹⁵⁴

Ulrike Puvogel suggests that the language, design, symbols, as well as the choice of location, the circumstances of the creation and construction of memorials often say more about the time in which they were erected and about their initiators than about the historical event or people they are intended to commemorate.¹⁵⁵ This is also supported by Hanno Schinke, in particular in relation to German war memorials. According to Schinke, as evident from the

¹⁵² Johnson, N. (1995), p. 54.

¹⁵³ Furlong, J. et al. (2002), pp 34-35.

¹⁵⁴ Wagner-Pacifini, R. and Schwartz B. (1991) The Vietnam Veterans memorial: commemorating a difficult past. *American Journal of Sociology*, 97 (2), p. 382.

¹⁵⁵ Puvogel, U. (1995) Einleitung. In: U. Puvogel, M. Stankowski and U. Graf (eds.) *Gedenkstätten für die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus: Eine Dokumentation*. Band 1 (= Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 245), 2. überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage. Bonn, p. 12.

history of war memorials in Germany - especially considering those constructed under the Nazi regime - their function was not primarily to enable new generations to have a 'correct' or even complete access to and version of the past. Instead, war memorials can be seen as articulations of the political memory of the time they were created.¹⁵⁶ The decision-making process proceeding the construction is therefore crucial as it determines what or who should be remembered, or equally should be omitted, and in which way. Hence, war memorials can be understood as "media of public remembrance culture" and represent time-specific comments in which the political and social values of the creators find expression that reach beyond the time of their creation.¹⁵⁷ In that sense, Schinke argues that war memorials do not necessarily refer to the past, but rather to the present in which they were created and to the future considering their intended longevity.¹⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Andreas Huyssen counters that the intended longevity or permanence promised by memorials is always built on quicksand. Some of these assumed permanent structures are destroyed during times of social turmoil or political change¹⁵⁹, as exemplified above in the case of Nazi Germany, with the aforementioned *Gëlle Fra* in Luxembourg City also falling into this category (Chapter 6). Meanwhile, "[o]thers preserve memory in its most ossified form, either as myth or as cliché. Yet others stand simply as figures of forgetting, their meaning and original purpose eroded by the passage of time."¹⁶⁰ Although referring to more modern memorials, especially those constructed during the 1980s and 1990s, Huyssen argues that there is no guarantee that these newer memorials, which were meant to last, and designed and built with public participation, lively debate and memorial engagement, will not transform like their predecessors into figures of forgetting.¹⁶¹ This implies that no matter the time period there is always a risk that a war memorial becomes overlooked or even forgotten over time.

¹⁵⁶ Schinke, H. (2016), p. 21; p. 30.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁹ Huyssen, A. (1993) Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age. *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 6 (2), p. 249.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

In the 1920s, Austrian philosophical writer Robert Musil already argued that “what strikes one most about monuments is that one doesn’t notice them. There is nothing in the world as invisible as monuments”.¹⁶² This statement seems paradoxical because monuments, which are but one type of memorials, are purposely built and intended to be seen, “but at the same time they are impregnated with something that repels attention”.¹⁶³ What can be considered true for any type of monument also applies to war memorials, and maybe even more so. People might walk through a city, being somewhat aware that there is a war memorial, be that a monument, plaque, or street name, however without knowing its origins, its history, or its meaning, and often walking past it without paying much attention. In a way, many war memorials traverse the passage from the active to the inert, risking turning into artefacts of a vanished age, as argued by Jay Winter. A war memorial that was once meaningful, visible, and arresting to all, might decades after the conflict it commemorates have left the spheres of living memory only be noticed with a hurried glance, or sometimes not at all.¹⁶⁴

In that sense, Winter describes war memorials as having a ‘shelf-life’. Much like dairy products that are only saleable and useable up to a certain moment, war memorials have a set period of time in which their meaning (either singular or plural) relates to the concerns of a certain group of people who were their initiators, creators, and users.¹⁶⁵ However, this idea of war memorials having a ‘shelf-life’ is complicated, and both true and false. There are many examples of war memorials which have indeed faded away, whose function and meaning no longer correspond to later generations, or are even considered inappropriate and offensive. This might be particularly true for WWI memorials erected during the rise of National Socialism in Germany, which glorified the war and soldiers. Examples of war memorials with a ‘shelf life’ can also be found among the WWI memorials in Luxembourg analysed and discussed in subsequent chapters. However, to attribute them a ‘shelf-life’ also seems to deny them their ability of having life-stories, or biographies, that evolve over time with new chapters being added. Even if these end in the memorial being neglected and forgotten,

¹⁶² As cited in Young, J. E. (1989), p. 71.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁶⁴ Winter, J. (1995), p. 78; p. 98.

¹⁶⁵ Winter, J. (2006) *Remembering war: The Great War between memory and history in the twentieth century*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 140.

they still form part of the memorial's life-story which inform on its meaning and role, or lack thereof, in a current society from which questions can be raised, and assumptions and conclusions can be drawn.

2.6 Chapter summary

There is a myriad of mediums and resources available to inform and learn about the past, be that through newspapers, books, artefacts, maps, pictures, oral testimonies, museums, or archives. Yet, it is the ability to recognise war memorials, even if turned mute, invisible, forgotten, destroyed, or having surpassed their 'expiration date', as artefacts or documents of the past, which presents a unique way to access the past, to ask and answer questions about who or what is being remembered, in which way, and what is potentially omitted. War memorials have the ability to reflect a specific view of the past that is anchored in the cultural, political, and social context of their construction, or even of later additions and changes.¹⁶⁶ War memorials can be re-used, re-purposed, re-invented, re-located, or re-symbolised, with new or multiple meanings and functions attached to them or falling into oblivion. It is usually those war memorials undergoing various changes over time that have the most intriguing and complex biographies. It is thus this idea, to view and use war memorials as resources and to construct and analyse their biographies, which will be used in this thesis in order to determine how WWI has been memorialised in Luxembourg since 1918.

¹⁶⁶ Schinke, H. (2016), p. 17; Posch, U. (2016) Zwischen Denkmal und Gegendenkmal. Das Altonaer ›31er-Kriegerdenkmal‹ im Spiegel historischer Bedeutungen und heutiger Betrachtungsweisen. *Hamburger Journal für Kulturanthropologie (HJK)*, 4, pp. 58-59.

Chapter 3 Phenomenology and biography of war memorials

3.1 Introduction to phenomenological archaeology

In the last three decades, phenomenology has become a prominent approach within archaeology, with a focus on landscape archaeology. Derived from philosophy and based on works by philosophers such as Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, many archaeologists have delved into phenomenological archaeology to aid their interpretations of landscapes, monuments and other material remains of the past.¹⁶⁷ In essence, phenomenology “aims to describe the character of human experience, specifically the ways in which we apprehend the material world through directed intervention in our surroundings.”¹⁶⁸ In other words, phenomenology is a “descriptive account of a phenomenon as unveiled to, and experienced by, the perceiver”¹⁶⁹, building on both perception and sensory experiences. Albeit visual perception being the most dominant sensory engagement in archaeological studies, phenomenology can also include sound, touch, and even smell in some cases.

The main purpose of this approach is to gain insights as to how people in the past interacted with various landscapes, structures, or objects¹⁷⁰ and has mainly been applied to prehistoric archaeology for which no written primary sources exist. With the publication of his book “*A phenomenology of landscape*” in 1994, British archaeologist Christopher Tilley is regarded as the pioneer of phenomenological archaeology. Much of his work is based on a first-person perspective of walking and moving through landscape, relying on different senses to analyse how prehistoric people might have experienced that same environment and interpreted the monuments within it, as also outlined by John

¹⁶⁷ Brück, J. (2005) Experiencing the past? The development of a phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory. *Archaeological dialogues*, 12 (1), p. 45.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁶⁹ Brophy, K. and Watson, A. (2018) Perception and experience. In: S. L. López Varela (ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Archaeological Sciences*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 1.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

C. Barrett and Ilhong Ko, as well as Donald Crystal.¹⁷¹ By walking through a landscape, the perceiver gets to experience the place as three-dimensional and sensuous which differs greatly from just looking at maps, documents, or images, that are always one step removed and somewhat detached.¹⁷² Physical engagement and embodied experience with the world and objects around us are therefore the key aspect of phenomenological archaeology.¹⁷³

As an interpretive method based on experience, phenomenological archaeology is still a relatively new concept, and mostly undertaken by British archaeologists within a Neolithic setting and rarely within modern or even contemporary history. The lack of a clear and distinct methodology results in many scholars disqualifying this approach from serious consideration within archaeology, often describing it as too ‘touchy-feely’.¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, as part of my thesis, I argue that the principle of phenomenology as used within archaeology may help to shed new light on how war memorials, and as a result memorialisation and commemoration of conflicts, were and still are experienced, what meanings they hold, what roles they play and how these evolve over time. Accordingly, phenomenology becomes a useful and applicable approach in studying the biography of war memorials and memorial spaces, especially the most recent chapter in their life-stories, enabling to see a fuller picture. Before looking at some examples where experiential approaches such as phenomenology have already been applied to the analysis of memorials, the different critiques of phenomenology within archaeology that have accumulated over the past years first need to be acknowledged and addressed.

3.2 Critiques

A prominent critique within phenomenological archaeology that keeps resurfacing is that of subjectivity versus objectivity. Phenomenology is largely associated with being too subjective, as it is “an individual intuitive

¹⁷¹ Crystal, D. (2018) Postphenomenology and Archaeology: towards a temporal method. *Time and Mind*, 11 (3), p. 298; Barrett, J. C. and Ko, I. (2009) A phenomenology of landscape: A crisis in British landscape archaeology? *Journal of Social Archaeology*, 9 (3), p. 276.

¹⁷² Johnson, M. (2007) *Ideas of Landscape*. London: Blackwell, pp. 89-97; Brück, J. (2005), p. 47.

¹⁷³ Brück, J. (2005), p. 47.

¹⁷⁴ Hamilton, S., Whitehouse, R., Brown, K., Combes, P., Herring, E. and Thomas, M. S. (2006) Phenomenology in Practice: Towards a Methodology for a ‘Subjective’ Approach’. *European Journal of Archaeology*, 9 (1), pp. 31–32.

understanding that is not open to assessment by the methods of ‘objective’ science.”¹⁷⁵ As noted by Ruth Van Dyke, the recorded results reflect the perceiver’s own momentary experience and cannot easily be reproduced in the exact same manner by someone else. This is because every person perceives an object or landscape differently, depending on that person’s own connection with said object or landscape. Other factors such as age, gender, physique, ethnicity, and social standings, which are unique to each person, as well as external influences, also need to be considered.¹⁷⁶

The experience and interpretation are further highly influenced by cultural and political values, attitudes, as well as preconceived ideas and knowledge. These factors therefore produce many alternative interpretations and carry different meanings depending on the observer, as commented by Joanna Brück.¹⁷⁷ Especially war memorials, which function as sites of memory, mourning and ritual, have multiple and even contested meanings¹⁷⁸ that might differ from generation to generation and from individual to individual. In this regard, however, subjectivity might be seen as a strength rather than a weakness, as it opens the possibility for insightful comparative studies.

Despite these differentiating factors, phenomenology is often scrutinised for representing the male gaze. The perspective of the white, often middle-aged, heterosexual modern male remains at the forefront, underplaying the diversity of human experiences and variations, as also argued by Lynn Meskell.¹⁷⁹ Taking the example of a war memorial, a phenomenological account of a millennial female observer with no direct connection to the conflict or victims that the memorial remembers will differ immensely from an elderly male descendant of one of the commemorated soldiers or civilian victims and having lived in the locality of the memorial for decades.

Further criticism focuses on the fact that although phenomenology is based on bodily and sensory experiences, sight remains the most dominant, with other

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁷⁶ Van Dyke, R. M. (2014) Phenomenology in Archaeology. In: C. Smith (eds.) *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology*. New York: Springer, pp. 5909 -5913.

¹⁷⁷ Brück, J. (2005), p. 61.

¹⁷⁸ Stephens, J. R. (2013), p. 660.

¹⁷⁹ As cited in Brück, J. (2005), p. 59.

senses only starting to be considered in more recent work.¹⁸⁰ It also needs to be considered that senses differ from person to person, with some having stronger or weaker senses. Human variability must therefore be taken into account within phenomenology.¹⁸¹ Moreover, the results might vary again if the same study is carried out a second time even by the same person, influenced by the initial experience, preconceived ideas, and other variables. Reproducing a phenomenological study through objective and scientific methods thus becomes practically unfeasible.

Other important variables relate to seasonal and weather conditions.¹⁸² A phenomenological exercise carried out on a hot summer's day with clear visibility will produce different results than on a foggy, dark, and cold winter's day. In "*Sites of Memory, Sites on Mourning*", Jay Winter describes his visit to Käthe Kollwitz's memorial titled *The Parents* in memory of her son Peter, who died at the front in 1914 only shortly after having joined the Imperial German Army. His visit and experience of this memorial occurred on a day with a light drizzle. According to Winter's account of his visit, this effect of the rain produced something extraordinary: a hunched-over figure in granite, representing Käthe Kollwitz grieving her son, with droplets of water falling from her face.¹⁸³ The rain mirroring the tears a mother would shed for her dead son is a powerful image linked to the effects weather can have on such a phenomenological experience. Even though Winter's visit was not motivated by consciously using such a phenomenological method to study the memorial, this example still illustrates the impact that such an approach can have on a perceiver, and that different circumstances and variables produce different observations and results. If Winter had visited this memorial on a sunny day, the experience and impact would not be the same.

As phenomenological archaeology draws its theoretical positions from the existential philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger, it assumes that there exist universal similarities in how humans perceive their surroundings and objects as

¹⁸⁰ Van Dyke, R. M. (2014), pp. 5913-5914.

¹⁸¹ Hamilton, S. et al. (2006), p. 34.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁸³ Winter, J. (1995), p. 113.

all human bodies share the same configurations.¹⁸⁴ As demonstrated above and underlined by Mark Pluciennik, bodies are not biologically or even culturally fixed¹⁸⁵, emphasising again the subjectivity of phenomenology. Pluciennik argues that “many of these ‘phenomenological’ approaches, even as they attempt to engage with cultural difference, often fall into the trap of reproducing a particular type of contemporary subjective, individual, highly self-conscious and intellectualized experience as a template for interpreting the past.”¹⁸⁶

Yet, the way we experience an object or landscape in its modern setting is ultimately different from what it used to be in the past. Landscapes or monuments alter over time, be this through weathering, by adding or removing other structures, or by generations of human activity leaving their mark. Our own cultural traditions and values also differ from those of the past, and can further be influenced by preconceptions, which all have an impact on our contemporary experience and perception. What we see and experience nowadays can therefore never be the exact same as in the past.¹⁸⁷

Therefore, Barrett and Ko criticise the belief that our own embodied experiences must reveal something of the experiences of our ancestors, calling it problematic. They add that the claims about the motivations of the original builders of a monument drawn from the collected field data are in fact unsustainable.¹⁸⁸ This is also acknowledged by Tilley, who states that, by applying phenomenology, an understanding in the present is generated which stands as an analogy or allegory for those of the past but is not intended as a form of empathy. Instead of a revealed truth and certainty about a landscape, or monument, and its past, it is a basis for hypotheses and arguments.¹⁸⁹ It can therefore be argued that the real value of phenomenology is not to learn how people of the past experienced a certain archaeological feature or landscape, but rather their condition, meaning, role and impact in a contemporary setting.

¹⁸⁴ Van Dyke, R. M. (2014), p. 5909.

¹⁸⁵ Pluciennik, M. (2002) Bodies in/as material culture. Introduction. In: Y. Hamilakis, M. Pluciennik and S. Tarlow (eds) *Thinking through the Body: Archaeologies of Corporeality*. New York: Springer, p. 174.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas, J. S. (2006) Phenomenology and Material Culture. In: C. Tilley et al. (eds.) *Handbook of Material Culture*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 55.

¹⁸⁸ Barrett, J. C. and Ko, I. (2009), pp. 278-279.

¹⁸⁹ As cited in Thomas, J. S. (2006), p. 55.

In conclusion, all these aspects listed above make it difficult to interpret the past objectively in a clear and scientific manner, consequently lacking replicability and methodological rigor.¹⁹⁰ According to Ruth Van Dyke “just as the landscape is not constant, neither is the human body”¹⁹¹ and with these changing variables, meanings can alter as well. Hence, to proceed with a phenomenological approach, it is crucial to be aware of these critiques and to highlight that the results are the respective perceiver’s singular views, experiences, and interpretations, which would differ greatly from a different person, context, and time. This is not to say that phenomenology should not be considered as a valid approach for analysing memorials and landscapes, or does not produce meaningful results worthy of attention. The importance lies in pointing out and acknowledging these issues and remaining critical.

3.3 Phenomenology as a contemporary and subjective experience

If a researcher steps away from the idea of trying to interpret the past in an objective manner and concentrates on the present, phenomenological approaches can add to the existing literature which focuses on the construction of knowledge in our contemporary world.¹⁹² In other words, as noted by Joanna Brück, describing our own embodied experiences provides more insights about contemporary perceptions and preoccupations than about the past.¹⁹³

Phenomenological approaches to contemporary heritage experiences have, for example, been carried out by Claire Nolan in 2019.¹⁹⁴ Through reflective walks, the focus was on the participants’ every day and in-the-moment felt experience of Stonehenge, Avebury and the Vale of Pewsey in Wiltshire, UK, and “how participants interact with the prehistoric archaeology in the study area, and the thoughts, feelings, sensations, and meanings that it evokes for them.”¹⁹⁵ Nolan explains the reason for selecting a phenomenological approach for her study due to its “potential to help participants to contemplate their direct lived

¹⁹⁰ Van Dyke, R. M. (2014), p. 5913.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5913.

¹⁹² Brück, J. (2005), p. 58.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁹⁴ Nolan, C. (2019a) Sites of Existential Relatedness: Findings from Phenomenological Research at Stonehenge, Avebury and the Vale of Pewsey, Wiltshire, UK. *Public Archaeology*, 18 (1), pp. 28-51.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

intellectual, emotional, embodied and affective experience of the archaeology per se.”¹⁹⁶ Nolan also acknowledges that meanings regarding a phenomenon are infinite. In essence, through phenomenology, her study was able to gather many different contemporary perspectives from participants¹⁹⁷, which in turn stresses the subjectivity and comparative possibilities of this approach.

It is this concept of a phenomenological approach in a contemporary setting with a subjective undertone that is reflected in my study of the memorialisation of WWI in Luxembourg, its purpose being not to interpret the past but to remain anchored in the present. My research is therefore not seeking answers to how people from the interwar period experienced the newly erected war memorials, but the focal point is on the contemporary observer’s experience and impressions and to assess which meaning the war memorials carry a hundred years on, thereby enhancing their biography as a result. The main objectives of this approach for my research can be summarised as follows:

- a. to study the biography of war memorials from their time of inception to the present day
- b. to get a better understanding of their meaning, importance, and changes over time
- c. to add to the general study of war memorialisation, commemoration, and collective memory

Rather than establishing a clearly defined and replicable methodology, which as outlined above is difficult to achieve, my thesis proposes an approach that is phenomenological in nature, coupled with a set of research questions as guidance (see Appendix 3). The results recorded through fieldwork become a new set of primary data for my own study as well as a new resource for comparison to various other war memorials, from different periods and regions in future studies.

¹⁹⁶ Nolan, C. (2019b) Prehistoric Landscapes as a Source of Ontological Security for the Present Day. *Heritage & Society*, 12 (1), p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Before elaborating in more detail on this methodology and the corresponding fieldwork in section 3.6 of this chapter, section 3.4 will outline a few prominent studies that apply phenomenological archaeology within modern or contemporary history with a focus on war-related places or objects. Section 3.5 will then cover studies, some phenomenological in nature though not explicitly stated, with a biographical approach to war memorials to uncover and analyse changes over time, which in turn can impact their meaning and social life within a community. Particular attention is also given to the choice of location.

3.4 Phenomenological studies of war memorials and battlefields

Phenomenological studies of conflict-related places or objects, such as battlefields, war memorials but also cemeteries, within a contemporary setting have only started to emerge in the last couple of decades. Although relatively recent, applying phenomenology to war memorials is therefore not a new concept that is being tested in my thesis. Rather, the phenomenological studies mentioned below together with the corresponding research questions serve as reference and inspiration, and in return prove the validity of this approach.

Patricia Carman and John Carman count among the archaeologists who have tried phenomenological fieldwork in relation to battlefields, both ancient and modern. As part of the “*Bloody Meadows Project*”, they covered various battlefields ranging from A.D. 991 up to 1813, examining them as sites of conflict and remembrance.¹⁹⁸ Since phenomenology requires embodied and sensory experiences by physically being there and going beyond looking at two dimensional maps or photographs, Carman and Carman argue that the same is true for battlefields. Studying battlefield plans cannot substitute for standing in the space where a historical event once took place.¹⁹⁹ This in turn can then also be considered valid for war memorials, as assessing photographs or other documentary material cannot compensate for standing in front of a memorial and getting a sense of the site. Through physical presence, it becomes possible

¹⁹⁸ Carman, J. and Carman, P. (2005) Ancient Bloody Meadows: Classical Battlefields in Greece. *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 1 (1), p. 19.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

“to come to an understanding of the meanings they carry in our own time”, as argued by Carman and Carman.²⁰⁰

Contrary to trying to recreate an individual battle and what the soldiers must have experienced, the “*Bloody Meadows Project*” concentrates on establishing a meaning for the historicity of the place in the present. Strictly speaking, the project intends to understand the nature of war in the past and the preservation and public interpretation of it in the present.²⁰¹ Consequently, a phenomenological study and fieldwork of such sites allows understanding of what meanings they carry in the present and thereby contribute to the study of collective memory,²⁰² which is also one of the aims of my thesis.

In the “*Bloody Meadows Project*”, the physical landscape of the battlefield becomes the object being studied, and at the same time the primary source of data. This approach allows new insights to be gained by approaching the site with a series of specific questions and recording the answers. The project directed some of its questions as to how these battlefields are marked, be this through signs or memorials that were erected.²⁰³ Carman and Carman view the marking of such sites as important as

“[they] indicate the way in which the site is perceived in the present; to whom, and in what way, it is conceived to be important. The purpose of investigating these aspects of battlefields is to gain an insight into the contemporary meanings ascribed to such places. The purpose of combining such interests with research into the battlesite as a historic landscape in its own right is to relate the two: to find out if particular kinds of historic places are treated in one set of ways, while others are treated the same or differently, and to what extent, by whom and for what purpose.”²⁰⁴

This concept will also be implemented in my thesis, but instead of considering battlefields as subject matter, the focus will be directed on the WWI memorials in Luxembourg and their surroundings. These memorials and memorial spaces

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁰¹ Carman, J. and Carman, P. (2012) Walking the Line Between Past and Present: ‘Doing’ Phenomenology on Historic Battlefields. In: H. Cobb et al. (eds) *Reconsidering Archaeological Fieldwork: Exploring Onsite Relationships between Theory and Practice*. New York: Springer, pp. 98-99.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 103.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

thus become the primary source through which new data can be collected by approaching them with a set of research questions determined by the researcher to gain insight into their contemporary meaning and purpose. Like the projects carried out by Carman and Carman, the emphasis is not on recreating “an experience of being in the past, but rather an experience in the present which simultaneously reflects and derives from the contribution of history to a particular place.”²⁰⁵ In that sense, it is about being in the present while still being aware of the past and history of a place.²⁰⁶

A study that applies phenomenology directly to war memorials is Thomas E. Beaumont’s “*The Phenomenology of Redemptive Violence*”. Through a phenomenological examination of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* in Washington D.C. and the *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* at Arlington National Cemetery, Beaumont argues that social institutions use bodies of war violence to justify such violence and render it redemptive.²⁰⁷ In other words, the experience of and affective responses to the memorials that he recorded during his examination reinforce the notions of redemptive violence and condoning war (from an US perspective) as good and moral.²⁰⁸

Even though my own research does not aim to answer such questions about violence through a phenomenological study and focuses less on emotive and behavioural responses, Beaumont’s approach and questions when observing his chosen war memorials are partially similar. According to Beaumont, phenomenology allows the researcher to “interrogate the memorial space in fruitful ways because of its focus on notions of orientation, the importance it places on the lived experience, and its interrogation of the material world that surrounds us.”²⁰⁹

The two memorials analysed in Beaumont’s project highlight very well the concept that phenomenology focuses on embodied experience of the memorial space. The essence of his study is perhaps less about the actual site, the

²⁰⁵ Carman, J. and Carman, P. (2012), p. 108.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

²⁰⁷ Beaumont, T. E. (2020) *The Phenomenology of Redemptive Violence*. *Alternatives*, 45 (4), p. 184; p. 196.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

surroundings or visibility - elements I will evaluate in my study - and instead more on the affective responses and behaviours to the memorials. Even so, he demonstrates well that phenomenological encounters vary from one memorial to another. As commented by Beaumont, the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* is a more dynamic and intimate experience where visitors are expected to get up close, being able to see their own reflections overlaying the names of the war dead. Contrary, visitors to the *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier* are kept at a distance through guards and barriers. Beaumont describes the responses to the experience of the tomb as more abstract and distant as the ones memorialised here have no names.²¹⁰

Apart from his phenomenological approach, Beaumont's focus on the narrative of redemption that is built into such memorials can also be readjusted to align with my own study of the WWI memorials in Luxembourg.²¹¹ Beaumont notes:

“The role of the monument is to demonstrate an understanding, a narrative surrounding the cultural memory of an event [...]. The discourse sustains memory and history as a lesson for the future—something to be understood and enacted—where the monument serves to present memory with a meaningful narrative that is confirmed by the spectators themselves.”²¹²

Rather than analysing how war memorials function to reproduce a narrative of redemption²¹³, my research will assess how certain WWI memorials in Luxembourg function to reinforce the pro-Allies and particularly pro-French narratives that were constructed after the war. It is this concept, that war memorials serve a purpose and demonstrate a narrative, are objects to be gazed upon, interpreted, and conferred with meaning²¹⁴, which can be applied to my own research.

Moreover, Beaumont draws attention to the flexibility of interpretation, especially in relation to the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* which is more ambiguous. This confirms again the subjectivity of phenomenology as each

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 188.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

monument can have diverse and contrasting interpretations and meanings, depending on the viewer. Here Beaumont refers to Marita Sturken's article "*The wall, the screen, and the image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial*". Sturken specifies that some veterans might regard the memorial as a type of atonement for how they were treated since the war; to families and friends it could represent an opportunity to express their grief; others might view the wall as an anti-war statement or even as an "opportunity to rewrite the history of the war to make it fit more neatly into the master narrative of American imperialism."²¹⁵ Similarly, a person with no direct or personal connection to the Vietnam War will also experience and respond to this memorial differently, highlighting again a multiplicity of interpretations and meanings which depends on variables.

3.5 Biographical studies of war memorials

Phenomenological studies that remain anchored in the present can enhance the biographical study of the place or object being investigated. Biographical approaches to objects have already been put into practice by other scholars and are particularly prevalent within the field of Material Culture, Archaeology and Anthropology. These approaches could be summarised as applying the metaphor of a life cycle to objects just as one would with a human lifetime, effectively writing a biography of an object's existence; this often extends beyond the period that such objects might normally be studied. Notable mentions are Rosemary A. Joyce's "*Things in Motion: Object Itineraries in Anthropological Practice*" focusing on the mobility of objects and thereby demonstrating their dynamic character²¹⁶, as well as "*The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*", edited by Arjun Appadurai.²¹⁷ The latter publication features different papers that centralise the interactions between objects and humans, examining how objects are used, traded or circulated, and simultaneously how humans find meaning(s) and value(s) in those objects. Even though the aforementioned publications apply the concept of biographical approaches to objects, the focus is not on memorials or conflict material

²¹⁵ Sturken, M. (1991) *The wall, the screen, and the image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. *Representations*, 35, pp. 133-134.

²¹⁶ Joyce, R. A. (2015) *Things in Motion: Object Itineraries in Anthropological Practice* (1st ed.). Santa Fe: SAR Press.

²¹⁷ Appadurai, A. (ed.) (1986) *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

culture; however, they are still worth mentioning to provide a broader context to biographical studies of objects or places.

An example of a biographical approach used in relation to prehistoric monuments and based on archaeological evidence is Cornelius J. Holtorf's life-histories of megaliths in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany, dividing the lives into different stages from childhood to old age.²¹⁸ Meanwhile, Darrell J. Rohl's paper "*Place Theory, Genealogy, and the Cultural Biography of Roman Monuments*" concerns, as indicative of its title, not just the cultural biography but also the concept of genealogy in relation to monuments. While this paper is not focused on war remembrance and does not attempt to construct a detailed biography of a specific monument, Rohl still provides observations and draws meaningful conclusions which can be applied to any type of memorial, monument or site. Consequently, Rohl notes that:

"Sites and monuments are often pigeon-holed, branded, and carefully circumscribed by chronological and thematic parameters that allow for simple and digestible messaging, but this practice establishes and reinforces a reductionist perspective in which only certain periods and functions are seen to really matter."²¹⁹

Rohl continues that this can result in researchers often overlooking the rich and complex life-histories, and even afterlife, of a site or monument²²⁰, which might include fascinating chapters surrounding its evolution over time, relocations, and any other alterations, as will be illustrated in my case studies.

The 'social life' of conflict-related objects has been explored in "*Matters of conflict: material culture, memory and the First World War*", edited and with contributions by Nicholas J. Saunders.²²¹ The different chapters shed light on objects such as a sewing kit from the Western Front, or so-called *Nagelfiguren* - little wooden figurines representing knights, eagles, or crosses covered with nails - which were very popular in Germany during the war. Although these

²¹⁸ Holtorf, C. J. (1998) The life-histories of megaliths in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany). *World Archaeology*, 30 (1), p. 35.

²¹⁹ Rohl, D. (2015) Place Theory, Genealogy, and the Cultural Biography of Roman Monuments. *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 2014, p. 1.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²²¹ Saunders, N. J. (2004) *Matters of conflict: Material culture, memory and the First World War*. Routledge.

objects cannot necessarily be categorised as ‘standard’ war memorials in the form of a monument or plaque - which are the key elements of this thesis - they still have stories to tell, often with a primary practical function before having new and different meanings associated to them as a result of war.

This is also the case for ‘Trench Art’ which describes “any object made by soldiers, prisoners of war and civilians, from war matériel or any other material, as long as object and maker are associated in time and space with armed conflict or its consequences.”²²² Hence, ‘Trench Art’ might include shell-cases or cartridges that have been embroidered or decorated, thereby losing their original destructive purpose and attaining a secondary life. These items are almost like time travellers, being “handed from soldier to wife, mother to child, grandparent to grandchild, and, perhaps, eventually sold on to an anonymous buyer [...]”²²³ Saunders posits that the object thereby follows a unique path, and it is able to trace the object’s journey as it intersects with the lives of various individuals, and often at different locations. This ultimately helps to construct a biography of the object. In other words, these objects have ‘social lives’ that can be explored to reveal the meanings, emotions and values attached to them, extending far beyond the context of war.²²⁴

Using similar biographical approaches to any type of memorial or monument allows the researcher to apply an engaged and immersive approach which goes beyond just looking at written or photographic data related to their construction or inauguration, thereby only showing a small fraction of their life-stories. A biographical approach enables the creation of a bigger picture of these memorials and looking at their whole lifespan and evolution, with the results obtained from a phenomenological survey representing their most recent chapter. Phenomenological and biographical studies of objects and places can thus work hand in hand to deepen our knowledge and understanding of war memorials and aid the assessment of their meaning, role, and importance over time and in the present, as well as highlight and evaluate any alterations.

²²² Saunders, N. J. (2011) *Trench Art*. Pen & Sword Books Limited, p. 25.

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 163-164.

A noteworthy biographical study of a war memorial is John R. Stephens' "*The cultural biography of a Western Australian war memorial*". Stephens employs the techniques of cultural biography to uncover the meaning of war memorials to their communities. The idea is to not solely focus on the memorial as an object, but to expand it and "examine the social life of a war memorial - to see how the cultural significance of a war memorial may be gauged by the relationships between the memorial and its public over time."²²⁵ Stephens takes the *Katanning War Memorial* as his case study, revealing three important stages within the memorial's lifespan: the initial stages of its production and interwar use; its decline and apparent neglect after 1945 having been the target of vandalism; and more recent relationships between the public and the memorial, and also the acknowledgment of other conflicts Australians were involved in after 1918. Stephens thus looks at the whole lifespan of this memorial and any alterations to the memorial, such as changing the direction it is facing. Through this approach, he illustrates that this war memorial has multiple meanings that emerged over time through its different relationships and interactions with the people around it, who in this case, as Stephens phrases it, have used and abused it. The cultural biography of a war memorial might thus help to present a wider understanding and a deeper cultural significance resulting from the relationships and interactions between memorial and public.²²⁶

The idea of analysing the biography of war memorials over a longer period has also already been put into practice in the aforementioned PhD thesis by Emma Login, by studying the chronological evolution of the war memorialisation process to prove that war memorials are part of an ongoing tradition of memorialisation.²²⁷ To do so, Login proposes a new approach to studying war memorials by looking at three overlapping parallel timescales. The first timescale is referred to as the chronological timescale from 1860 to 2014, the period covered in Login's research. The second timescale relates to the time that has passed since the event of a conflict. The third timescale indicates the time that has passed since the construction of a memorial. It is proposed that a consideration of each of these three intersecting timescales is needed if a full

²²⁵ Stephens, J. R. (2013), p. 662.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 662; pp. 671- 673.

²²⁷ Login, E. L. (2014), pp. 7-8; p. 385.

understanding of a war memorial at any given point in time is to be reached. To fully understand an object and the levels of engagement that take place, and to illuminate the physical and symbolic evolution over time, Login thus adopts this biographical approach which centralises the war memorial itself by examining its whole lifespan.²²⁸

Many of the existing biographical studies of war memorials often focus only on one specific or a particular set of memorials as case studies, as also stated by Login. In contrast, Login's thesis incorporates a wide range of war memorials from different places, periods, and conflicts in a more comparative manner. Her aim was to build a framework within which memorials from different periods can be conceptualised.²²⁹ Thereupon, Login does not go into detail with each memorial mentioned in her thesis but selects a few memorials to showcase this biographical approach by means of the timescales.

Login's proposed new longitudinal approach of studying the full lifespan of war memorials through these timescales will also be partially reflected in my thesis. While there is no attempt to recreate Login's timescales in the exact same manner for the WWI memorials in Luxembourg, the idea of constructing or adding to a biography by looking at these memorials from a wider perspective, including inception, construction, inauguration and continued use over time up until the present day, will resurface. Because, to quote Login, "to focus only on the period of construction can result in only a partial understanding of the monument."²³⁰

Applying a primarily archaeological approach in her thesis, in combination with archival material and interview data, it becomes clear that Login's fieldwork was phenomenological in nature, although without explicitly mentioning it by name in her thesis. She visited several French, British, and American war memorials and took photographs, observing the memorials as objects but also within their setting, commenting on aspects like appearance and visibility. Her thesis highlights the importance of the relationship between a memorial, its

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12; p. 44; p. 77.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

location and environment, stressing that this can play an important role in understanding an object.²³¹

The location of a memorial is usually not chosen at random. This could be due to various pragmatic reasons, but they might also be placed in a certain location and facing a certain way with an additional purpose, often in a manner that allows them to draw meaning from their surroundings, as remarked by Login.²³² This is the case, for example, with the *Statue of Peace* in Seoul, which has already been the subject of different studies, such as by Jieheerah Yun discussing counter-monuments as a mnemonic device by taking this memorial as case study.²³³ Noteworthy is also David Shim's examination of the material rhetoric of this memorial, as the discussion is based on site visits and Shim's own experiences with the statue, thereby again phenomenological in nature, while also drawing on observations of visitors, visual documentation and interviews.²³⁴

Unveiled in 2011, the *Statue of Peace* commemorates the 1000th week in demonstrations held by the KCJR (Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan) and by former 'comfort women' who were among the thousands of Korean women abducted and forced to work as sex slaves during Korea's occupation by the Japanese Empire. The statue represents a barefooted teenage girl in traditional *hanbok* clothing with a small bird on her left shoulder, sitting on a chair and clenching her fists. Her shadow depicts an old woman meant to represent the current old age of the survivors and their enduring hardship. Next to her is an empty chair, meant to symbolise the vacant place of the deceased 'comfort women' but also inviting people to commemorate and participate in the movement to demand a sincere and long-awaited apology and acknowledgment from the Japanese government for what these women had to endure. Therefore, the gaze of the girl is fixed on the Japanese Embassy in Seoul on the opposite side of the street.²³⁵

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²³² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²³³ Yun, J., (2023) The counter-monument as mnemonic device: The case of the Statues of Peace in South Korea. *Memory Studies*, pp. 1-16.

²³⁴ Shim, D. (2023) Memorials' politics: Exploring the material rhetoric of the Statue of Peace. *Memory Studies*, 16 (4), pp. 663-676.

²³⁵ Shim, D. (2023), pp. 665-667; Yun, J. (2023), p. 5.

Having the statue directly facing the Japanese Embassy was a very deliberate choice which conveys a very powerful message but also had grave consequences for the bilateral relations of Japan and South Korea. The Japanese government condemned the memorial and demanded its removal on the condition of its offering both an apology and monetary compensation for the victims. An agreement could later be reached, but it was practically nullified after former ‘comfort women’ objected the removal of the statue, where it still remains to this day. Copies of the statue were even installed all over South Korea, including in front of the Japanese consulate in Busan, which was removed by the police before being reinstated due to public pressure, but also in other countries around the world, amounting to a total of 124 as of August 2020 in and outside South Korea.²³⁶

The example of the *Statue of Peace* clearly illustrates the importance given to the choice of location and even the direction a statue and its gaze might be facing, as also commented on by Shim. Shim notes that the location of this statue helps shape the bodily experience of visitors with the memorial, being situated in the lively Seoul district of Jongno, featuring many cafés, bars, tourist sites, and office buildings.²³⁷ Shim further points out that “given the statue’s easy accessibility, it invites close, bodily encounters from curious pedestrians”²³⁸ While the placement of the memorial meant that Japanese diplomats could see the statue as they went to and from work each day, Shim remarks that “the empty chair also indicates how the memorial engages its viewer’s sense of sight”²³⁹ by looking straight at the embassy along with the statue.

When analysing a memorial, the correlation between the memorial, its placement and its surroundings must therefore always be taken into consideration. Had the *Statue of Peace* been placed for example within a park or even an open public square surrounded by other monumental statues of former Korean kings, the purpose and message of the statue would have been completely lost and would not have resonated the same way. Likewise, if the surroundings change, or if the memorial is relocated, even for practical reasons,

²³⁶ Shim, D. (2023), pp. 663-667; Yun, J. (2023), pp. 5-7.

²³⁷ Shim, D. (2023), p. 669.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 669.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 671.

this certainly has an impact on its meaning, intention, value as well as narrative. Even though other copies of the *Statue of Peace* have since been created and installed all over South Korea and abroad, the removal or relocation of the original *Statue of Peace* to another unrelated place would certainly affect the impact, significance and meaning of its intended purpose, as its location was anything but arbitrary. The meaning of war memorials can thus fully or partially be defined by their location.²⁴⁰

This correlation between war memorials and surroundings, or memorial setting, has thus far not enjoyed much attention by scholars and has generally been reserved within the context of public art, as noted by Login. However, to fully engage with the study of war memorials, this symbiosis is worthy of consideration as a war memorial cannot only draw meaning from its surroundings, but vice versa, it also has the power to ascribe new meaning to the place it has been situated in. Furthermore, landscapes, and in particular cityscapes, are ever evolving with buildings or vegetation added or removed. Such changes to the surroundings of a war memorial can then have positive or negative ramifications on its visibility, accessibility as well as importance and meaning, or even result in relocation.²⁴¹

Moreover, and as noted in Chapter 2, it is evident that war memorials and their ascribed meanings can evolve, in some cases even to the point of becoming insignificant to current society. In such cases, memorials might merge into their surroundings unnoticed and risk turning into invisible and forgotten landmarks. In other instances, certain memorials become more visible again within their landscape through acts of engagement and remembrance, such as at major anniversaries.²⁴² This interdependent and reciprocal study of a war memorial, its memorial space and surroundings through a phenomenological approach, and simultaneously expanding on its biography, will therefore be highlighted and visualised in my thesis with reference to selected examples from Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI.

²⁴⁰ Login, E. L. (2014), pp. 363-364; Johnson, N. (1995), p. 55.

²⁴¹ Login, E. L. (2014), pp. 46-47.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

In conclusion, the above-mentioned studies demonstrate the validity and advantages of phenomenology as an avenue of in-depth studies not just of war memorials but by extension also of war memorialisation and commemoration in the present. Here the phenomenology of war memorials does not simply seek to understand the motivations of people in the past and its original environment, although certain assumptions can still be made. But the contemporary and subjective experiences through bodily presence enable the researcher to analyse the importance, meaning and role of war memorials within their setting, society, and collective memory even long after the end of the conflict and after the groups of people who initiated the memorial are gone, all the while constructing the biography of the war memorial and memorial space being experienced. It can also be argued that such a phenomenological and biographical approach to war memorials serves to counteract the concept that a war memorial has a 'shelf-life', because even if it turns mute or invisible, having lost its original purpose, that in itself is just one of many chapters of its biography and part of the memorial's lifespan.

3.6 Methodology and fieldwork

The above-mentioned studies have demonstrated that the idea of applying phenomenology as used in disciplines like archaeology to historic places or even war memorials from a contemporary perspective is nothing new being tested but a valid approach. However, such a large-scale phenomenological and experiential exercise to study WWI memorials in Luxembourg has not yet been attempted. The following section will outline the approach created for this research project as well as summarise the research questions (for details see Appendix 3).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, and as will become further apparent in Chapter 5, the literature on the memorialisation of WWI in Luxembourg is scarce, with no detailed study existing to date that goes beyond the more widely known memorials. While newspaper articles, archival documents and photographs make up one important set of primary sources, only relying on written sources still creates a distance to these memorials, their biography, their meaning, their importance as well as the atmosphere they evoke, especially in the present

time. So, to add another layer to the study of these war memorials, as part of my research I visited each identified WWI memorial in Luxembourg using the phenomenological principle of being in the place and sensory experience, with a focus on sight and sound. Sight and sound are arguably the most descriptive senses able to inform us of the shape, colour, and general appearance of an object but also to absorb the surroundings and atmosphere.

The research questions listed in Appendix 3 were set up before the fieldtrip to have a parameter for all memorials and partially based on and inspired by the previously mentioned studies. The research questions are divided into two categories, the first set focusing on the location and memorial space, and the second on the memorial itself. In summary, the questions for this experiential fieldwork focus on the following aspects: location, visibility, accessibility, design and inscriptions, purpose and meaning, alterations and surroundings. Many of these questions cannot be answered by reading through newspapers or simply looking at photographs. It is crucial to come face to face with these war memorials, and to soak in the surroundings. By being hyperaware of the memorials and the memorial site and by paying meticulous attention, different observations can be gained which might otherwise go unnoticed.

3.6.1 Phenomenological survey

A fieldtrip to Luxembourg was carried out during late August and early September 2021 with the aim of conducting a phenomenological survey of WWI memorials. The reason for undertaking the fieldwork during that time is linked to an easing of Covid-19 restrictions thereby presenting a window of opportunity for travelling from the UK to Luxembourg. Subsequent shorter trips to Luxembourg took place in October 2021, July 2022, December 2022 and December 2023, during which time some of the selected memorials were revisited and to collect additional data.

The first challenge was to identify and locate as many WWI memorials as possible throughout the country. In contrast to British WWI memorials which are listed within the *Imperial War Museum's* War Memorials Register, comprising of over 80,000 British war memorials from various conflicts, no equivalent official

register or inventory of the same calibre of all known war memorials from different conflicts exists for Luxembourg as researched and compiled by either research centres or public bodies in Luxembourg. The results of this fieldtrip thus became twofold: undertaking the phenomenological survey to construct the most recent chapter of these memorial's biographies, as well as compiling the most comprehensive inventory to date of all identified WWI memorials in Luxembourg (Appendix 1) and corresponding location maps (Appendix 2), both being major contributions to the study of WWI memorials and war memorialisation in general in Luxembourg.

This phenomenological study was executed in two stages: the initial preliminary research followed by the fieldwork, both outlined below. It must be noted that the fieldwork was partially undertaken having to rely on public transport to visit the different locations. Consequently, I could not always spend the same amount of time at each site as I was restrained by train and bus timetables. Other memorials were visited by car, having to rely on a driver for lack of my own driving license. Nevertheless, I managed to visit all memorials listed in Appendix 1 and conducted a thorough phenomenological study allowing enough time to record my findings.

3.6.2 Preliminary research

Different sources were consulted to identify as many WWI memorials as possible. An initial important resource was the interactive online map from the digitalised exhibition "*Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*".²⁴³ This map features 211 bomb sites, 44 cemeteries and 61 hospitals linked to the conflict. In terms of war memorials, the map indicates a total of nine memorials, either monuments or plaques, although with only limited description and no photographic evidence of the current state of the memorial. A second resource came from the *Musée National d'Histoire Militaire* (National Museum of Military History) in Diekirch whose researchers are currently in the process of conducting a similar study to compile a register of all WWII memorials in Luxembourg, but not for WWI memorials. While their focus remains on the later conflict, the exchange of findings allowed the discovery of a few additional

²⁴³ See interactive map: C²DH (2018) *Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*.

memorials commemorating both world wars. Supplementary information on WWI memorials and their locations was gathered through simple online research and secondary literature.²⁴⁴

Despite this rigorous research to find all WWI war memorials, there is no absolute certainty about how many WWI memorials exist in Luxembourg. As will be demonstrated in the subsequent chapters, several memorials are relatively small and easily overlooked, situated within cemeteries, churches and even inside a municipal building and a museum. These lesser-known and smaller memorials are likely only known to people frequenting those places. With sometimes little to no information available on these smaller local memorials, it is therefore difficult to search for them during preliminary research. Two of the memorials listed in the inventory, in Bascharage and Ettelbruck respectively, were also found almost by chance and towards the end of my research while consulting other articles, having previously not encountered any mention of these two memorials or their location elsewhere. In other instances, the names of WWI victims were included when a local WWII memorial was erected or simply by installing a memorial commemorating all victims of both world wars. In order to know how many joint war memorials there are, it would require a more thorough search of all WWII memorials, which as aforementioned account for over 500.

Both the inventory and location maps created as a result of this research are therefore not definitive. Even so, the comprehensive list of memorials produced during this research, which exceeds the one on the interactive online map, can be seen as the first attempt to list all hitherto known WWI memorials, leaving room for additions.

At this point, it must also be noted that the primary sources consulted during this research mainly consist of articles from different Luxembourgish newspapers, reporting on the planning of the war memorials and inaugural or other commemorative ceremonies, in addition to archival documents. While many of these newspaper articles are available via the online database

²⁴⁴ Some memorials are for instance also listed on the *Traces of War* website.

“*eLuxemburgenisa*”, the “*Documentation Historique*” by Tony Ginsbach is an additional valuable primary source. Fully digitalised by the *Archives nationales de Luxembourg*, the “*Documentation Historique*” features newspaper articles, both national and international, together with photographs of the time. Consisting of 28 volumes in total covering the period from 1895 to 1929, 13 volumes concentrate on WWI and the relations between Luxembourg and the Allies. The feuilleton “*Abreißkalender*” by Batty Weber, chief editor of the liberal newspaper *Luxemburger Zeitung*, is another of the main primary sources consulted during this research. Written between 1913 and 1940 on a nearly daily basis, the “*Abreißkalender*” functions as an eyewitness account from Weber, who offers his own opinions and observations about WWI and the interwar period in an often satirical and humorous style. This feuilleton, which is fully available online, is thus an exceptional source when researching this period of Luxembourg’s history.

However, with regard to the newspapers, no articles could be consulted during the period of 1940 and 1945 due to the Nazi occupation of Luxembourg and resulting censorship. Additionally, most primary and secondary sources are written in either French or German, with a small amount written in Luxembourgish. In the case of newspaper articles from the early twentieth century in German, many are written in the old cursive German alphabet as it was customary back then. Therefore, a substantial part of this research project includes accurate translations for quotes or paraphrasing.

3.6.3 Fieldwork

With sometimes more or less precise directions available on their actual location, the next step was to physically visit these memorials to conduct the phenomenological survey and take photographs. While the majority were relatively easy to track down, a couple of memorials required actively searching for them once their general location was known. This was in part due to the lack of knowledge of their existence, available information, and signposting. However, apart from three, all other memorials identified through preliminary research or shared by the staff of the *Musée National d’Histoire Militaire* were successfully located and visited during my first fieldtrip in summer 2021. The

memorial plaque in Esch-sur-Alzette could not be visited in person at its usual location (see 9.4 for details). The other two memorials (in Bascharage and Ettelbruck) were visited in winter 2023.

Once at the site of the memorial, I started to record my findings using a voice recording app on my phone, guided by a printed out set of research questions (Appendix 3). Rather than adhering to these questions like a rigid step-by-step guide, I let myself experience each memorial in the here and now. I generally focused first on the location and accessibility, recording my steps on how I found the memorial space if previously unknown. This was then followed by recording my impressions on either the memorial itself, the memorial space, or the general environment, whichever had the most immediate impact. The experience of the memorial and its surroundings thus dictated how the fieldwork unfolded, allowing for a more natural process. Following this more organic approach, none of the memorial visits were exactly the same and the time spent at each site also differed slightly. This is only natural as larger memorials with a more imposing surrounding will require more time than a small plaque in a more modest setting without any other distractions or side features. Nonetheless, I still ensured to tick off all the research questions from the list.

Taking photographs of the memorials and surroundings was also a principal aim of this fieldwork. Firstly, the photographs enhance the comprehensive inventory of WWI memorials in Luxembourg, which has not been attempted before. Secondly, the photographs are like snapshots of these memorials, showing us one precise moment in time. This makes it possible to see changes over time, either by comparing them to older photographs where available or by observing the memorials' evolution in the years to come, thereby continuing their photo-biography. While some photographs might reveal the deterioration of memorials over time by being forgotten, photographs of other memorials show their continuous upkeep or even additions to them. Lastly, the photographs also capture the surroundings of the memorials, which allows to comment on the atmosphere as well as their respective visibility or invisibility. To do this, several photos from different angles and distances were taken.

In Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 a few selected memorials have been chosen as case studies and will be assessed in more detail, synthesising the results from the desk-based research and the phenomenological survey in an aim to build on their biography and thereby evaluate their meaning, role, and importance over a hundred years after the end of the conflict. While not all war memorials can be reviewed in detail in my thesis, the complete inventory of all WWI memorials in Luxembourg that were identified during this research can be found in Appendix 1, including their location, date (if known), type, a short description including notes from the phenomenological survey, a photograph of the memorial as taken during the fieldwork, and any comments that are of interest.

The focus on the selected memorials is on one side due to the scope of my thesis and being the sole researcher, but also because the selected memorials are considered as the most crucial in answering the research questions of this thesis, presenting the most intriguing life-stories, alterations to be discussed and to draw conclusions. On the other side, lack of detailed information for many of the smaller and lesser-known memorials with often little to no written evidence and in fact without major changes made to them make it difficult to consider them as case studies. Despite contacting the local councils where these memorials are situated, detailed information about their initiators, construction, inauguration, possible additions, or changes, could in some cases not be obtained, often due to the lack of written or archival information on these memorials. For these reasons, apart from cataloguing these smaller memorials and summarising their current state, they cannot be evaluated further at this stage.

To emphasise the subjective nature and the embodied experience in the present day of this approach, the accounts of the phenomenological survey results for each case study are written from my own perspective and therefore also in the first-person point of view. These accounts will give a narrative of locating the memorials combined with the descriptions of the memorials and immediate surroundings based on sensory experiences and personal impressions. Comments about whether or not the chosen location, or relocation in some cases, is still relevant and advantageous to the memorial are also included. This being said, this thesis does not aim to propose any alternatives or to diminish existing war

memorials at their chosen location in any way. Nothing being constant, it is only natural that the environment and memorial itself change over time. However, by examining war memorials over a longer period beyond written sources and by experiencing them first-hand, this thesis seeks to acknowledge and contemplate these changes and resulting impacts when studying war memorials. It is the application of phenomenology as validated in this thesis that brings these changes and resulting effects to the foreground allowing for more in-depth analysis, discussion, comparison, and review of a war memorial's impact on the observer.

3.6.4 Selection criteria for case studies

The selection criteria were based on how the analysis of the memorial might aid in answering the various research questions of this thesis and primarily those which support the post-war narrative; in understanding Luxembourg's interwar memorial politics with a focus on the union of Luxembourg and France specifically; and Luxembourg and the Allies in general. Other criteria were whether a memorial has a particular interesting or complex biography marked by alterations or relocation, and also with insightful observations gained from a phenomenological point of view.

Moreover, this thesis concentrates on WWI memorials (including those also jointly commemorating WWII) within the public domain that can be found in Luxembourg, thereby excluding any memorials outside its borders. For this reason, any mentions of individual Luxembourgish *légionnaires* on a local memorial in France, the *Monument aux Morts*, such as for example in Jarny, or the aforementioned plaque at *Les Invalides* in Paris, are therefore not included. Individual graves of soldiers or civilian victims of war, having either died during or after the conflict and found at different Luxembourgish cemeteries, are also not being considered for this PhD, as this would fall under private remembrance rather than public. The WWI memorials should thus be in the public domain and stem from a national or local initiative, or be in dedication to a town or city in Luxembourg.

The case of the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof* (literally meaning German soldiers' cemetery) in Clausen where 205 German WWI soldiers are still buried to this day will be mentioned; however, no further detailed analysis and discussion of this cemetery, memorial stones and plaque will be attempted at this stage as it does not fit into the above-listed criteria, the cemetery being cared for by the *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V.* (German War Graves Commission). Nonetheless, reference and a summary of the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof* needs to be made in relation to how WWI soldiers from different nations were buried and reburied in Luxembourg, and subsequently memorialised (Chapter 7). This cemetery will also be listed in the inventory and feature on the location map of Luxembourg City as a reference point, though it should not be considered a Luxembourgish WWI memorial per se.

This thesis focuses on war memorials primarily in the form of monuments and memorial plaques, but also commemorative street names are considered, given their presence in the public domain and their physicality through their actual street signs. Other types of memorials, such as commemorative books or medals, are not included in this thesis. Therefore, the *Livre D'Or de nos Légionnaires 1914-1918*, listing names and photographs of Luxembourgers within the *Légion étrangère* and in other Allied armies (though not a complete list), as well as a special commemorative medal, the *Médaille commémorative de la Grande Guerre 1914-1918*, given to a number of *légionnaires* after the war, will be mentioned but do not form part of the case studies, and will also not be included in the inventory.

Chapter 4 From sitting in the waiting room of war to becoming one of the Allies

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the historical context, briefly summarising the history of Luxembourg with focus on the country's relations with France and Germany to better understand Luxembourg's position towards both neighbours before, during and after WWI. Further, this chapter outlines Luxembourg's involvement in and experience of WWI which is one of the key components to understand Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI. The narratives that existed during and after the war are also addressed and discussed, with particular attention to the pro-Allies post-war narrative.

It has to be noted that a condensed retelling of Luxembourg during WWI will be presented in this chapter, and that this period of Luxembourg's history is far more complex, but the scope of this thesis does not allow to delve into more details. The different matters addressed below are the most important factors to keep in mind and serve as a contextual framework when evaluating Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI.

4.2 The waiting room of war

Journalist and author Batty Weber, who continued living and working in Luxembourg during WWI, equated Luxembourg's experience of WWI as always sitting in the "*Wartezimmer des Krieges*", or "the waiting room of war". He compared this to a dentist's waiting room, being able to hear what goes on behind closed doors and wondering anxiously when it will be one's turn or waiting for it to be over. In other words, Weber supported the view that Luxembourg did in fact not really experience this war. Instead, Luxembourg's experience of WWI was solely limited to waiting for the war to be over, living, thinking and feeling with a noose around the neck, and going about daily life like

sleepwalkers and feeling useless, as phrased by Weber.²⁴⁵ This waiting room in which Luxembourg hovers thus implies its helpless situation as a neutral country caught in the crossfire between the greater powers, “forced to experience the effects of the war as a powerless and passive spectator” as described on the “*Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*” website in relation to Weber’s statement.²⁴⁶

Weber alluded to this waiting room on several occasions in his feuilleton “*Abreißkalender*” in liberal newspaper *Luxemburger Zeitung*, from its initial coinage in 1915 and even up to 1936, when he further claimed that Luxembourg always encounters war differently to its neighbours.²⁴⁷ In 1916 he even published his book titled “*Aus dem Wartezimmer des Krieges*” (From the waiting room of war). In his publications, Weber wrote about a purely passive experience, to the point that this passivity and inactivity is the fundamental condition of Luxembourg’s national existence.²⁴⁸ Other national authors of the time, such as Nikolaus Hein maintained a similar stance to Weber. In Hein’s poem “*Abseits*” (literally meaning offside) from 1917, Luxembourg is portrayed as silent or mute, and far from fight and murder.²⁴⁹

However, how accurate is this portrayal of Luxembourg’s experience of WWI? Weber’s concept of the forced experience of non-action as non-experience²⁵⁰, has already been put into perspective by different scholars. In an essay by Anne-Marie Millim from the University of Luxembourg, it is argued that Weber’s attitude

“[...] bears poignant testimony to the long-standing tradition of the nation’s hesitance to recognise the plight of Luxembourgers during WWI as suffering. Because ‘neutrality’ is often equated with the state of being safe, of being protected from attack, or even of actively

²⁴⁵ Weber, B. (1915c) *Abreißkalender*. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (01.07.1915); Weber, B. (1936) *Abreißkalender*. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (10.03.1936).

²⁴⁶ See Weber’s *Aus dem Wartezimmer des Krieges* in Collection: C²DH (2018) *Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*.

²⁴⁷ Weber, B. (1936).

²⁴⁸ Weber, B. (1936).

²⁴⁹ As cited in Lieb, D., Marson, P. and Weber, J. (2014), p. 152.

²⁵⁰ Millim, A-M. (2018) “*Aus dem Wartezimmer des Krieges*”: The Non-Experience of World War One in Luxembourg. In: C²DH (2018) *Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*, p. 6.

dodging conflict, it conjures up a false sense of both shelteredness and blamelessness.”²⁵¹

On one side, Weber is correct in saying that Luxembourg did not endure WWI in the same way as other countries, especially compared to neighbouring Belgium whose neutrality was also violated. But on the other side, to speak of a passive or even non-experience of this conflict would also undermine the struggles, horrors, and pains that the Luxembourgers went through during those four years, as also noted by Millim. The damage to various parts of the capital and industrial south, the deaths of 53 civilians resulting from no less than 136 air raids combined with the constant fear and risk of being killed or becoming homeless, did not represent a safe haven.²⁵² Millim continues by stating, “in light of the injustice of being bombed despite the status of neutrality, the omission, banalisation, and minimisation of Luxembourg’s war experience seems particularly unjustified.”²⁵³ Nevertheless, Millim also points out the distress and shame associated with neutrality in Weber’s literary documentation of WWI. While on one side Weber denies the experience of this conflict, his feuilleton and the resulting book collection also show his conviction of the contrary. Therefore, “the confusion that Weber creates between experience and non-experience, as well as over what would qualify as the one or the other, can be seen as a literary rendition of ‘existential survivor guilt’.”²⁵⁴

The argument of the waiting room has also been refuted by Denis Scuto, who emphasises that “historical-critical research cannot pretend as if the period of 1914-1918 is not part of Luxembourg’s history.”²⁵⁵ Often featuring as ‘*petite guerre*’ in its historiography and collective memory, Scuto notes that WWI has often simply been regarded as a prelude to the many upheavals of the interwar period, with focus on the referendum of 1919 in connection to Luxembourg’s monarchy and independence, universal suffrage movements and announcing WWII. Referring to national historian Gilbert Trausch, who calls WWII an ordeal - which was definitely the case and is not being called into question here - Scuto

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁵⁵ As cited in Hentschel, U. (2018) Unbequemes Wissen komfortabel aufbereitet. *Science.lu*, 19 July. [Own translation]

counters this by asking if WWI did not equally represent an ordeal that the population and the government had to face and overcome.²⁵⁶

Scuto also strongly criticises a publication available in German, French and English by the *Service information et presse* (Information and Press Service)²⁵⁷ titled “*About...the History of Luxembourg*” for supporting an old-fashioned view and not incorporating, and even ignoring, new research on WWI from the past decades.²⁵⁸ Having read this publication as part of this PhD research as it includes a lot of useful information on other aspects of Luxembourg’s past, it is true that WWI is presented as a reductive and simplified version of a complex historical period, not even mentioning the aerial bombardment. Referring to Scuto’s critical article, this publication by the *Service information et presse* gives the impression that Luxembourg was a passive victim - much in accordance with Weber’s words - and “continued to observe strict neutrality with regard to all the warring parties.”²⁵⁹ WWI is being diminished in comparison to WWII, the latter conflict painted as the matrix or mould of the nation, but as pointed out by Scuto, WWI was equally vital for the formation of the Luxembourgish nation as new research and recent exhibitions had already demonstrated.²⁶⁰ Other national historians, who have directed their focus of research to WWI, especially in relation to the centenary, also emphasise that Luxembourg’s experience of and involvement in this conflict should not be glossed over or trivialised. This is for example accentuated in the collective work “*1914-1918: Guerre(s) au Luxembourg - Krieg(e) in Luxemburg*”, highlighting that “WWI has left a profound mark on the country, be this politically, economically, socially or culturally.”²⁶¹

Nonetheless, and presumably based partially on the critique but also the attention awarded to WWI in recent years, the above-mentioned publication by *Service information et presse* has since December 2022 been updated and

²⁵⁶ Scuto, D. (2016) Redécouvrir 1916. *Tageblatt*, n° 43, 20/21 February, p. 8.

²⁵⁷ *Service information et presse*, created in 1944, is the body responsible for circulating communications from the Luxembourgish Government and attached to the Ministry of State, under the direct authority of the Prime Minister.

²⁵⁸ Scuto, D. (2018c), p. 9.

²⁵⁹ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017) *About...the History of Luxembourg*. Information and Press Service of the Luxembourg Government, p. 16.

²⁶⁰ Scuto, D. (2018c), p. 9.

²⁶¹ Majerus, B., Roemer, C. and Thommes, G. (2014), p. 7.
[Own translation]

amended. The section on WWI now consists of a couple of pages rather than three paragraphs, and clearly incorporates new research and more accurate views on this topic, the concept of the passive victim gone. This is evident by the first line which states: “Officially, Luxembourg was a neutral country. In reality, the situation was complicated.”²⁶² This updated version now also includes the aerial bombings by the Allies and the steel plants’ involvement in the German war effort, to be elaborated in section 4.5.

To get a better understanding of Luxembourg’s experience of WWI, its importance, and consequences, and to put this into context with its memorialisation in later chapters, its history first needs to be acknowledged. To do this, the following section will first briefly cover the ‘making of’ Luxembourg and how it became the small independent nation it still is today. The relations with France and Germany will also be examined, from a cultural, political, economic but also linguistic point of view. Subsequently, Luxembourg’s experience of and involvement in WWI will be reviewed covering the invasion, the occupation years, the aerial bombardment, and Luxembourgish involvement in foreign armies. Throughout, Luxembourg’s claim of neutrality, which can be called ambiguous at best, will also be discussed, explaining why the Entente considered Luxembourg enemy territory during the war. The chapter will end with an analysis and discussion of the post-war narrative that emerged in the interbellum, which runs like a red thread through Luxembourg’s memorialisation of WWI, effectively moving Luxembourg from the waiting room into the corner of the Allies.

4.3 The making of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Despite its small size, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has a long, vibrant, and interwoven history not only with its immediate neighbours of current day France, Germany, and Belgium but also with many prominent rulers and royal houses of Europe. Before being established as a grand duchy at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, Luxembourg changed hands on multiple occasions during the medieval and early modern period, experiencing occupation or integration into

²⁶² Péporté, P. and SIP (2022) *About...the History of Luxembourg*. Information and Press Service of the Luxembourg Government.

other kingdoms or territories. It was especially between the fifteenth and eighteenth century that Luxembourg witnessed the so-called ‘period of foreign domination’, ranging from dukes of Burgundy to Holy Roman emperors holding the title of Duke of Luxembourg. Given Luxembourg’s strategic geographical and central position (see Figure 4-1) along with the fortress of Luxembourg City, the country was a lucrative territory to acquire and control. This also led to Luxembourg being caught up in a series of conflicts from the sixteenth century onwards involving the Habsburgs, the Valois and later the Bourbons of France.²⁶³

During this time, the fortress of Luxembourg City was extended and improved under its respective rulers, gaining the nickname of the ‘Gibraltar of the North’. The remnants of these foreign occupations can still be seen on the dismantled fortress today, most notably the fortification works carried out by French engineer Vauban and the Spanish turrets. During the French Revolution, the fortress was conquered by revolutionary troops in 1795. With this conquest, Luxembourg was annexed to France and remained as *Département des Forêts* (Forests Department) until the collapse of the Napoleonic regime and the Congress of Vienna.²⁶⁴

Luxembourg’s elevation to a grand duchy at the Congress of Vienna, and becoming a separate political entity, did not put a stop to foreign domination yet. First, the new grand duchy was assigned to William I of Orange-Nassau of the Netherlands, as compensation for various small principalities being integrated into Prussia. Second, Luxembourg became a member of the German Confederation with the fortress being controlled by a Prussian garrison to fend off any new attacks by France. Third, Luxembourg’s borders were redrafted, with the predominantly German-speaking region east of the rivers Moselle, Sûre and Our being awarded to Prussia. This was in fact the second partition of Luxembourg (Figure 4-1), the first occurring in 1659 with the southern parts of the country being ceded to France by the then Spanish rulers following the Treaty of the Pyrenees.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), pp. 4-5; p.9; Péporté, P. and SIP (2022), p. 8; p. 12.

²⁶⁴ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), pp. 4-5; Péporté, P. and SIP (2022), p. 12-14.

²⁶⁵ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 5; Péporté, P. and SIP (2022), p. 14.



Figure 4-1 The three partitions of Luxembourg
Source: Creative Commons

The third and final partition of the Luxembourgish territory, which gave the country the borders it still has today (Figure 4-1), occurred in 1839 at the Treaty of London. After the Belgian Revolution of 1830 against the Dutch, at which many Luxembourgish volunteers participated, and the creation of the Kingdom of Belgium, the great powers of Europe sought to divide Luxembourg between Belgium and the Netherlands. While this was accepted by the Belgians, William I of the Netherlands initially opposed to this idea. This left Luxembourg being run by a double administration for almost a decade; Belgium had authority over the country while Dutch authority was limited to the city and fortress. Upon William I's agreement, Luxembourg was divided for a final time with a vast and predominantly French speaking area to the west known as Belgian Luxembourg being ceded to the Kingdom of Belgium; an area still known today as *Province du Luxembourg*. Considerable smaller in size, the remaining Grand Duchy of

Luxembourg remained under the sovereignty of the Dutch Orange-Nassau dynasty.²⁶⁶

The king of the Netherlands would bear the dual title of King-Grand Duke until the death of William III in 1890. While William III's daughter ascended to the Dutch throne, the title of Grand Duke of Luxembourg was passed on to distant relative Adolphe of the German House of Nassau-Weilburg due to different laws of succession. However, before gaining its own dynasty in 1890, which finally marked the break from the Netherlands for good, the small country took centre stage at the European chessboard once again a few decades prior, during the so-called 'Luxembourg Crisis' of 1867.²⁶⁷

After the Austro-Prussian War in 1866 led to the disbanding of the German Confederation and expansion of Prussia, Napoléon III of France pursued compensation. He made a proposition to William III, at that time still Grand Duke of Luxembourg, to purchase the small country for five million gold francs. This deal was at first accepted by William III, but strongly opposed by Prussia whose garrison was still stationed at the fortress of Luxembourg. As with the Congress of Vienna and the Treaty of London, the great powers of Europe would once again decide the fate and future of Luxembourg. To solve this crisis, a compromise was reached at the Second Treaty of London in 1867. Prussia was to withdraw its garrison, and Luxembourg was to be demilitarised and forever declared neutral. Consequently, Luxembourg's famous fortress was dismantled. These terms were accepted by both Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and Napoléon III, who in turn had to renounce France's territorial claims over Luxembourg.²⁶⁸

The neutrality status was secured through a collective guarantee by the signatories of the treaty after the United Kingdom refused the request by Prussia and France for an individual guarantee against any violation, the United Kingdom declared it was not prepared to go to war for Luxembourg unless all the signatories would intervene together. In the event of a violation, the guarantors

²⁶⁶ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 8; Péporté, P. and SIP (2022), p. 16.

²⁶⁷ Kreins, J.-M. (2008) *Histoire du Luxembourg: Des origines à nos jours* (4th ed.). Paris: Presses univ. de France, p. 85; Thewes, G. and SIP (2017) p. 8-10.

²⁶⁸ Reitz, J. and Remesch, A. (2017) *Lëtzebuerg an den Éischte Weltkrich*. Bascharage: Cercle Culturel Claus Cito a.s.b.l., p. 9; Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 10.

would first collectively determine the existence of such before discussing the countermeasures. This was interpreted as the contract only being binding against interference by third parties. This meant a violation by one of the signatory powers would make the contract obsolete with the remaining parties no longer tied to it.²⁶⁹ In this regard, Richard Seiwert comments that since France and Prussia were also among the signatories, Luxembourg's neutrality defence was in essence worthless.²⁷⁰

Luxembourg's international status became anchored into its constitution of 1868 with the first article reading "The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg forms an independent, indivisible, inalienable and perpetually neutral state."²⁷¹ Without a standing army since 1867, Luxembourg was henceforth to commit to the principle of impartiality in times of peace as well as in times of war.²⁷² While the great powers of Europe turned the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg into an independent, neutral and autonomous nation during the course of the nineteenth century, a national and separate identity from its neighbours developed only slowly.

In contrast to many other nations within Europe of the past and present, Luxembourg was declared an independent nation before a true and unique national sentiment had emerged. After the Belgian Revolution and the creation of the independent Kingdom of Belgium in 1831, many Luxembourgers had supported the revolution and at first even regretted the separation from Belgium. It would take another few decades before Luxembourg started to slowly develop its own national identity and sense of patriotism, aided by language, music, literature, and economic growth.²⁷³ Among these factors, it was especially language and economic growth that would also have a substantial

²⁶⁹ Dietrich, R. (1957) Deutsch-luxemburgische Beziehungen 1815-1945. *Internationales Jahrbuch Für Geschichtsunterricht*, Vol. 6, p. 190; Seiwert, R. (2015) Occupation of Luxembourg. In: U. Daniel et al. (eds.) *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Issued by Freie Universität Berlin.

²⁷⁰ Seiwert, R. (2015).

²⁷¹ As cited in Kayser, S. (2016) *Le Luxembourg, d'une guerre à l'autre: L'indépendance du Grand-Duché dans la tourmente (1914-1945)*. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Centrale, p. 27.

[Own translation]

Note: Luxembourg is no longer a neutral state as it is a member of NATO.

²⁷² Kayser, S. (2016), p. 27.

²⁷³ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 11.

impact on Luxembourg's relationship with its neighbours, in particular France and Germany (first as Prussia and later as the German Empire).

4.4 Luxembourg's relationship with Germany and France

When assessing Luxembourg's relationship with both Germany and France (and to some extent Belgium) the use of languages first needs to be considered as it would later greatly contribute to nation-building and the rise of a national sentiment.²⁷⁴

The last partition of the territory in 1839 and the loss of the French speaking area to Belgium left the remaining Luxembourgish territory within the German speaking sphere; however, the language situation in Luxembourg is far more complex. Michael Langner refers to a diglossia²⁷⁵ wherein over centuries German was used as the written language while Luxembourgish was the spoken colloquial language.²⁷⁶ Linguistically closer related to German than to French, the Luxembourgish language, classified as a Moselle-Franconian dialect until it was awarded the status of national language in 1984, was thus the language spoken in everyday life. Despite this dominance of Germanic languages, the usage of French remained present in Luxembourg. The law of 1843 on primary education made the learning of both German and French compulsory, effectively making Luxembourg trilingual.²⁷⁷

Over the years, French gained a different status than German and even the colloquial Luxembourgish. French became the language of the social elite, the intellectuals and even of the administration and justice.²⁷⁸ French also slowly trickled down to other areas, such as agriculture, with rural classes gaining interest in the language. Rural landowners wanted their children to have an education in accordance with the traditions of the country and they saw the French language as an integral part of this. Many young farmers would also

²⁷⁴ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), pp. 11-12.

²⁷⁵ Diglossia: the coexistence of two varieties of the same language throughout a speech community. Often, one form is the literary or prestige dialect, and the other is a common dialect spoken by most of the population – as defined by Encyclopædia Britannica.

²⁷⁶ Langner, M. (2019) Die Stellung des Deutschen in Luxemburg. *Sprachspiegel*, Heft 4, p. 105.

²⁷⁷ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 12.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

continue their professional education and training in agriculture in France.²⁷⁹ The pull towards France for many other young men and women, seeking employment as craftsmen or maids respectively, is thus also indicative of Luxembourg's Francophilia²⁸⁰, which would later also be instrumental in the construction of the post-war narrative and memorialisation of WWI in the interwar period (see 4.11).

With regard to Luxembourg's relationship with Germany before the war, an article by Joseph Hansen²⁸¹ published in 1912 offers more insights; however, it needs to be noted that Hansen himself was a Francophile, so scrutiny should be observed. Hansen argues that the awakening of a Luxembourgish national sentiment developed as a natural reaction against a German invasion and infiltration through economic means. Allegedly, two powerful German steel companies in the industrial south of Luxembourg systematically excluded Luxembourgers as workers with the result that arguably whole neighbourhoods in that area were 'invaded by' Germanic elements.²⁸² In addition to German steel companies having a great influence on its economy, Luxembourg was a member of the German *Zollverein* (customs union) from 1842 with its railway network under German control from 1872. Concerns were voiced that this economic dependence on Germany could bring about political subjugation and that the risk of assimilation was high. Other concerns regarded what might happen if Luxembourg's national interest were to clash with those of the influential German mines and factories. With cultural and linguistic ties to Germany as well, it was suggested Luxembourg distance itself from Germany and seek support and interest from other nations, especially France but also the United Kingdom.²⁸³

Apart from the economy, it was also felt that Germans held the upper hand at the royal court after the dynastical shift. With Adolphe of Nassau-Weilburg ascending to the throne in 1890, concerns surfaced about him being German even though Adolphe never pursued Pan-Germanism, respecting the country's

²⁷⁹ Hansen, J. (1912) Visées germaniques au Luxembourg avant la Première Guerre mondiale. *Galerie - Revue culturelle et pédagogique, Differdange 2* (1983–84), n° 4, p. 792.

²⁸⁰ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 12.

²⁸¹ Joseph Hansen was a known Francophile, founder of the *Alliance Française* in Luxembourg and part of the small spy network during WWI. See section 1.4 for more details.

²⁸² Hansen, J. (1912), pp. 789–790.

²⁸³ Hansen, J. (1912), p. 790; Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 12.

neutral status, as noted by Jean-Marie Kreins.²⁸⁴ Moreover, Hansen comments that all senior officials at the court were German, but that while the Nassau-Weilburgs can perhaps not be blamed for wanting to keep those in office who had been loyal to them before the accession to the Luxembourgish throne, the population wished for these foreign officials to shed some of their German rigidity and adapt more to their new environment.²⁸⁵ Hansen mentions Mr Brincour, an influential figure within the *Chambre des Députés* (Chamber of Deputies or Parliament), who also voiced his concerns that those closest to the sovereign, but who have no contact with or connection to the population, might want to assume a sort of political tutelage and influence over the sovereign house. According to Mr Brincour, the political entourage of the sovereign should only consist of Luxembourgers with the same political aspirations as those of the *Chambre* and the people; a statement which gained him much applause.²⁸⁶

In 1912, Marie-Adélaïde ascended to the throne becoming the first grand duchess of Luxembourg at the age of 17, after the family pact of 1783 had been amended to allow female succession. Hansen refers to a Rhine-Westphalian gazette, in which an article suggested that Marie-Adélaïde should marry a German prince, which would ensure the sooner or later inevitable political incorporation of Luxembourg into the German Empire.²⁸⁷ Even the German emperor allegedly supported a marriage between her and the crown prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, which eventually would not have been possible due to religious reasons. Not doubting the patriotism of the Luxembourgish royal family at this time, the Luxembourgish press still protested vehemently against this Pan-Germanic menace.²⁸⁸

Marie-Adélaïde's mother²⁸⁹, who felt her subjects' preference and devotion to France, anxious to escape the grip of the Germanic spirit, made sure that French was a dominant feature of the princess' education.²⁹⁰ Even though, Marie-

²⁸⁴ Kreins, J.-M. (2008), p. 85.

²⁸⁵ Hansen, J. (1912), p. 791

²⁸⁶ As cited in Hansen, J. (1912), p. 791.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 791.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 791.

²⁸⁹ Infanta Marie Anne of Portugal, House of Braganza. She grew up in Austria-Hungary, and was regent of Luxembourg between 1908 and 1912, during the illness of her husband Guillaume IV, Grand Duke of Luxembourg, and shortly in the name of her daughter Marie-Adélaïde having ascended the throne while underaged.

²⁹⁰ Hansen, J. (1912), p. 792.

Adélaïde never married a German prince, and with French becoming the dominant language at the royal court, which it still is today, in 1918 she approved of her sister Antonia's engagement to Rupprecht, Crown Prince of Bavaria and commander of the 6th Army on the Western Front. Additionally, her apparent close relationship with Kaiser Wilhelm II, being accused by her political enemies of harbouring pro-German sentiments and thus considered a traitor, as well as her meddling in domestic politics, played a crucial role in her downfall and abdication in favour of her sister Charlotte in 1919 (see 4.10).²⁹¹

Lastly, when looking at the relationship with and view of Germany, the Luxembourgish colloquial expression '*Preiss*' needs to be considered, a term that seems to be anchored in the consciousness, or subconsciousness, of many Luxembourgers. Commonly used to refer to a German person, the word '*Preiss*' initially referred to a Prussian and is believed to have originated when the Prussian garrison was stationed in Luxembourg from 1815 to 1867. Different reports exist mentioning quarrels between the population and the Prussian soldiers whose authority many did not respect or accept. In a time when Luxembourgers slowly started to develop their own national identity, Luxembourgers relied on their own native language to distinguish themselves from the Prussian soldiers, to strengthen their national sentiment, but also to show their discontent.²⁹²

As commented by Emile Hengen and Marius Remackel, the term was used similarly to how people from the south of Germany, such as Bavaria, would curse at the Prussians from the north, or even anyone who was not Bavarian. Luxembourg's motto "*Mir wëlle bleiwe wat mir sinn*", which translates to "we want to remain what we are", is taken from the refrain of a famous patriotic song titled "*De Feierwon*" from 1859 to mark the departure of the first train from Luxembourg, already indicative of Luxembourg's growing national sentiment. Even before WWI, the line from this song was often changed to "*Mir wëlle jo keng Preise gin*" meaning "we do not want to become Prussian" and

²⁹¹ Gardini, F. (2012) *Storms over Luxembourg*. Scotts Valley CA: CreateSpace, pp. 134-136; p. 160; Weber, J. (2014) Marie Adelheid, Grand-Duchess of Luxembourg. In: U. Daniel et al (eds) *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Issued by Freie Universität Berlin.

²⁹² Henge, E. and Remackel, M. (2007) *De Preiss*. In: S. Kmec et al. (eds.) *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg I: Usages du passé et construction nationale*. Luxembourg: Éd. Saint-Paul, pp. 279-284.

also sang with these anti-Prussian lyrics during the course of the war. The word ‘*Preiss*’ thus started as a term Luxembourgers used to distinguish themselves from the Prussians, to express their own identity and sense of togetherness, but turned into a derogative term especially later during WWII, when the Nazis followed their plan to turn Luxembourgers into Germans.²⁹³ It is still a well-known and partially used expression nowadays, though in a less derogative way.

Ultimately, Luxembourg’s growing national sentiment, patriotism, the development of a distinct culture, and its relationships with its neighbours during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, seemingly contributed to the development of growing anti-German and pro-French sentiments.²⁹⁴ Consequently, former German diplomat Karl von Pückler noted shortly before WWI: “With Germany, this little state entered into a marriage of convenience, but with France it was conducting a love affair.”²⁹⁵

4.5 The invasion and occupation by Imperial Germany

On 2nd August 1914, troops of the Imperial German Army crossed the border to invade and occupy Luxembourg, violating the country’s neutrality status. Without a standing army to defend itself (with only some volunteers), protests from the Luxembourgish government and authorities followed promptly. The German response, or rather excuse, was that they expected a French attack on Luxembourg if it had not already happened, which proved to be false. The protests from the Luxembourgish government continued with even Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde sending a telegram to Kaiser Wilhelm II with the plea to safeguard the rights of the small country. This turned out to be in vain, as more and more troops entered Luxembourg, marching towards the Belgian and French border.²⁹⁶

The German Empire’s first military engagement of WWI did thus not occur in France, Belgium, or Russia, but in Luxembourg. The 2nd August 1914 is officially regarded as the day that Luxembourg was dragged into this power struggle

²⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 280; for audio of *De Feierwon: C²DH (2018) Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*.

²⁹⁴ Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 12.

²⁹⁵ As cited in Thewes, G. and SIP (2017), p. 12.

²⁹⁶ Wilmes, R. (2014) *Wie Luxemburg den Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs erlebte. Luxemburger Wort*, 28 February.

between these great European nations, but little is known about the events that preceded this invasion only a day before. It was in fact not the first time that German troops entered Luxembourg. On the evening of 1st August 1914, soldiers of the 69th Infantry Regiment arrived at the train station of the little town Troisvierges (see Appendix 2), destroying the telegraph along with 150 meters of railroads, only to retreat over the border within less than two hours.²⁹⁷

This rather strange event has been interpreted as an accidental invasion. The German troops were prepared and ready for attack on that evening; however, the Kaiser was still attempting to secure the United Kingdom's non-involvement in his upcoming war against France and Russia. Due to this, the attack was being delayed for a few hours, a decision apparently not relayed to the 69th Infantry Regiment who were under the impression that the invasion of Luxembourg was in full swing. A telegram demanding to respect Luxembourg's neutrality was sent on the same evening by Prime Minister Paul Eyschen to the German government. This fell on deaf ears as the second, and this time, successful invasion of Luxembourg followed mere hours later, on 2nd August.²⁹⁸

What followed were four years of occupation. Against the presence of approximately 5,000 German soldiers stationed throughout the country and with the implementation of a military administration under Richard Karl von Tessmar, no further takeover of its administration or direct interference in internal affairs and institutions by German authorities took place. Contrary to WWII, the occupation did not impact the use of different languages, with French retaining its prominence, and interactions between soldiers and civilians were also generally cordial. Luxembourg decided to continue its policy of neutrality, which in practice was not that easy to maintain. Facing different internal issues, Luxembourg's political elite and economy was not able to remain autonomous, also complying with the occupiers' demand for the French and Belgian ambassador to leave the country.²⁹⁹ In other words, as articulated by Serge

²⁹⁷ Calmes, C. and Bossaert, D. (1996) *Geschichte des Grossherzogtums Luxemburg: Von 1815 bis heute*. Luxembourg: Éd. Saint-Paul, pp. 299-300; Tutton, T. (2020) The Accidental Invasion: Luxembourg's little-known role in the outbreak of World War I. *RTL*, 19 January.

²⁹⁸ Tutton, T. (2020).

²⁹⁹ Reitz, J. and Remesch, A. (2017), pp. 46-47; Seiwerath, R. (2015); Majerus, B. and Roemer, C. (2015) Luxembourg. In: U. Daniel et al. (eds) *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Issued by Freie Universität Berlin.

Hoffmann, while the Luxembourgish government remained in place, it was still under the tutelage of its occupiers.³⁰⁰

There were five different governments between August 1914 and November 1918, some of them short lived, indicating political instability. All five governments were confronted with securing supplies for the population, while simultaneously trying to maintain the country's independence and good relations with the Allies. With its own reserves decreasing as the war prolonged, bad harvests, the German soldiers living at the population's expenses and the importation of goods from other countries becoming difficult, the population was especially hit by food scarcity and famine, with black markets flourishing.³⁰¹

Luxembourg could not acquire supplies through the Commission for Relief in Belgium or other neutral countries. This was opposed by the British arguing that Luxembourg was part of the *Zollverein* and occupied by Germany; it was therefore Germany's responsibility, amidst fears that their enemy could also profit from this through confiscation. On the other side, Germany also opposed the importation of goods from other neutral countries and did not allow Luxembourg to have its own supply policy intending to oblige the Luxembourg government to acquire goods directly through its service of purchase (*ZEG Zentraleinkaufsstelle*). Luxembourg effectively became dependent on the German Empire.³⁰²

As remarked by Charles Roemer, this war of hunger, resulting in entire social classes and professions seeing their living conditions decrease was at the forefront for the population. They were more concerned about price inflations of potatoes or flour than the fighting at the nearby Western Front, mirrored in the literature and songs written during the war. Luxembourg experienced its own fight within its borders, not just socially but also geographically: the rural and agricultural north against the urban areas and industrial south. The working class, who suffered the most, blamed the greed of farmers and merchants, who profited from the higher prices for this crisis, equating them to the hyenas on

³⁰⁰ Hoffmann, S. (2018) La disette au Luxembourg pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale. *Ons Stad*, n° 118, p. 23.

³⁰¹ Majerus, B. and Roemer, C. (2015); Hoffmann, S. (2018), pp. 23-27.

³⁰² Majerus, B. and Roemer, C. (2015); Hoffmann, S. (2018), pp. 23-27.

the battlefields. Their dissatisfaction led the workers to unite and strike in June 1917. Although no one died directly of starvation, an increase of health issues and mortality caused by malnutrition could be observed, with the consequences of the food shortages affecting all sectors of Luxembourg's society.³⁰³

Luxembourg's steel industry was also harshly affected by the war causing fluctuations in production. The dependence on raw materials such as coke from Germany resulted in supply difficulties after the requisition of the railway by the army and prioritising military transport. The mass departures of German workers expecting their enlistment notice and also Italian workers returning home fearing the closure of borders provoked labour shortage and furloughs. While a number of steel factories in German hands, even before the war, were involved in the German armament industry, some Luxembourgish steel plants, despite intending to comply with the neutrality status, also either directly or indirectly contributed to the German war effort.³⁰⁴ As noted by Jacques Maas, on closer inspection the distinction between war production and general production is difficult, even ambiguous. For example, rail supplies produced in Luxembourg were used to maintain German railway lines transporting troops. Luxembourg's steel industry was thus integrated, willingly or not, into the German war economy.³⁰⁵

The term resistance is always associated with WWII in Luxembourg, and never with WWI. Yet, despite the few but rather passive resistance attempts by the government and without an official resistance led by the population against the German occupiers from 1914-1918, there was nonetheless a small network of spies operating within Luxembourg during WWI, among them the group known as '*La Dame Blanche*', Camille Joset, the aforementioned Joseph Hansen and also Lise Rischard, the latter recruited by the British Secret Service. Rischard's spy network primarily observed German rail movements and troop activities within Luxembourg. The encrypted reports were passed on to Hansen and were integrated into articles in the newspaper *Der Landwirt*, finding its way to the British intelligence office in Paris through a reader in Switzerland. Nonetheless,

³⁰³ Roemer, C. (2014) Unser täglich Brot. In: B. Majerus et al. (eds.) *op.cit.*, pp. 120-123.

³⁰⁴ Reitz, J. and Remesch, A. (2017), p. 78; Maas, J. (2018) Rails et poutrelles, bombes et luttes sociales. L'usine sidérurgique de Dudelange à l'époque de la Première Guerre mondiale. In: A. Reuter et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 16-22.

³⁰⁵ Maas, J. (2018), pp. 22-23.

what can be considered the Luxembourgish resistance against the occupier during WWI is a little known fact, to the point it has been named a secret and forgotten war.³⁰⁶

4.6 Ambiguous neutrality

Luxembourg's claim of neutrality during WWI is a complicated one and can be called into question. Neutrality evokes the meaning of non-involvement and impartiality, supporting neither side of a conflict. Yet, Luxembourg constantly hovered in a rather complex and ambiguous state of neutrality. Luxembourg's neutrality status during WWI is a topic also discussed by historians researching and writing about Luxembourg's political and economic involvement during the war in recent years. As quoted by Scuto, "WWI does not fit into the linear discourse and hence into the imagination of many Luxembourgers, because the behaviour does not conform to the resistance seen during WWII."³⁰⁷

Contrary to Luxembourg's invasion and occupation by Nazi Germany from 1940 to 1944, which was faced by a much stronger and active resistance - despite also active or passive collaboration by others - the Allies of 1914-1918 did not necessarily regard Luxembourg as neutral or part of the Entente Powers. The claim of neutrality could not be upheld due to a rather reluctant and passive resistance from the government and population, even if in retrospect no one seems to know, or wants to know, about that fact, as argued by Uwe Hentschel.³⁰⁸ Luxembourg's little resistance can be explained partly because, as a demilitarised country, it had no real means to fight against the invaders, but also because of its political and economic ties to Germany.³⁰⁹

Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde's familial ties to Germany along with the welcome the Kaiser received to the grand-ducal palace in late 1914 did not improve in like manner Luxembourg's claim of neutrality to the outside world, moving Marie-Adélaïde into an unfavourable light for many Luxembourgers and among

³⁰⁶ Debruyne, E. (2014) Une guerre secrète et oubliée. In: B. Majerus et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 45-55; see also C²DH (2018) *Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*.

³⁰⁷ As cited in Hentschel, U. (2018).

(Own translation)

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ Camarda, S. (2018) Land of the Red Soil: War Ruins and Industrial Landscapes in Luxembourg. In: S. Daly, M. Salvante, V. Wilcox (eds.) *Landscapes of the First World War*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, p. 106.

the Allies.³¹⁰ This stands in direct contrast to her sister Charlotte who succeeded her in 1919 and who actively supported the Luxembourgish resistance and independence during WWII while in exile.

Consequently, despite initial protests deemed insufficient, the coexistence between the national institutions and the occupying forces, also observed by the government and the *Chambre des Députés* - although after the war much of the responsibility and blame were shifted onto Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde - on top of the railway and steel industry's direct or indirect involvement in the German war economy undermined the country's officially proclaimed policy of neutrality.³¹¹ For these reasons, the Allies concluded that Luxembourg had sided with the German Empire allowing them to regard the small grand duchy as enemy territory and military target, thereby justifying the aerial attacks.³¹²

4.7 Aerial bombardment

Batty Weber wrote in his “*Abreißkalendar*” on 30th October 1914 how the mumbling faraway noise coming from the Western Front could be heard in Luxembourg, how one could feel the slight vibrations and trembling of the earth travelling from the feet through the whole body like shockwaves. They could all feel it, yet it was still at a distance.³¹³ By 12th March 1915, Weber noted that people were fully accustomed to the distant sound of cannons and artillery, but it was still far away enough that it remained something unexperienced and unseen.³¹⁴ Weber indirectly referred again to this non-experience of war. Although the front would never encapsulate Luxembourg, by the time Weber wrote those comments in his “*Abreißkalendar*”, Luxembourg had already come face to face with the war on its own soil.

Over the course of four years, Luxembourg was bombarded by French and British airplanes a total of 136 times, resulting in 53 civilian deaths³¹⁵, clearly bringing the war closer to Luxembourg's doorstep as previously anticipated. The majority

³¹⁰ Weber, J. (2014).

³¹¹ Calmes, C. and Bossaert, D. (1996), p. 300.

³¹² Scuto, D. (2017) Eyschen, Paul. In: U. Daniel et al. (eds.) *1914-1918-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Issued by Freie Universität Berlin.

³¹³ Weber, B. (1914) *Abreißkalendar*. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (30.10.1914).

³¹⁴ Weber, B. (1915b) *Abreißkalendar*. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (12.03.1915).

³¹⁵ Scuto, D. (2015) Mémoires de la guerre dans l'ère des victimes. *Tageblatt*, n° 236, 10 October.

of the attacks affected Luxembourg City and the industrial south. The capital was bombarded on 22 occasions between 1914 and 1918. The 310 bombs that were dropped by airplanes of the Allied forces killed 28 people, injured a further 71, and caused substantial damages to buildings and infrastructure. The first documented report of an aerial bombardment occurred on 23rd August 1914 in the vicinity of the capital's main train station when five grenades were dropped by French airplanes. With no casualties to claim, it was assumed that the plane was on a reconnaissance mission, having the attack on the railway network as a secondary mission.³¹⁶

The skies above Luxembourg City stayed quiet until October 1915 before the next air raid happened, causing the first casualties. The main target in the city during the strategic day and night bombing by the Allies was the train station; the junction of five different lines transporting many of the German troops. As aviation and aerial warfare was still in its infancy at the time, with bombs often being dropped by hand, other areas of the capital were consequently hit, including Bonnevoie, Hollerich, Clausen and Limpertsberg. As inhabitants close to the train station did not feel safe in their homes, many opted for so-called '*Ausschlafengehen*' by renting rooms in other parts of the city where they sought shelter every night.³¹⁷

The systematic bombing of the industrial south started from spring 1916 onwards. The steel plants at Esch-sur-Alzette, Differdange, Dudelange, Rumelange and also Steinfort in the west, many of which were controlled by German enterprises, were among the main targets. In Dudelange, for example, the ARBED steel plants were attacked on 10 occasions, causing relatively minor damages so that the production resumed shortly after. In contrast, the adjacent workers' quarters were often affected considerably, causing deaths and casualties among the inhabitants. Like the situation in the capital, the civilians suffered the most during these air raids and were subjected to the constant fear of the next attack. As a result, countermeasures, alarm systems and shelters for

³¹⁶ Jungblut, M-P. (2018) Kollateralschäden? Stadt Luxemburg und der Luftkrieg 1914-1918. *Ons Stad*, n° 118, p. 4.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-7.

staff were set up along with covering production facilities with reinforced concrete slabs.³¹⁸

J. P. Robert, who witnessed many of the aerial attacks on Luxembourg City, wrote a detailed essay on the aerial bombardment of the capital based on his own memory and by collecting various other accounts and newspaper articles. Published in separate articles in *Luxemburger Zeitung* in 1922, Robert's motivations for writing this essay were to tell Luxembourg's story during the war and for future generations to learn and remember what had happened.³¹⁹ Robert pointed out how many Luxembourgers reacted with agitation and anger towards the Germans instead of the Allies after the first bombing. People blamed Germany as they could not fathom that these attacks were carried out by the French. It was initially believed that it was instigated by the Germans to show that the French also violated Luxembourg's neutrality status and were no better.³²⁰

Even after the air raids continued in 1915, the disbelief of France carrying out such attacks remained prevalent to the point that it was considered a mistake or confusion as the French army report did not always list Luxembourg as a target.³²¹ On the other side, these attacks were seen as unjust bombardment. The Hague Convention of 1899 prohibited attacks on undefended areas; nevertheless, the Allies carried on with the bombardment until shortly before the Armistice. Declining any responsibility for the damages and casualties, the presence of enemy steel in Luxembourg and the importance of the railway network served as justification for their actions.³²²

As will be seen in subsequent chapters, the anger and attribution of blame remained on the invaders and not the French or British, who also carried out some of the later aerial attacks such as on Clausen in July 1918. The bombardment of 'neutral' Luxembourg by the Allies was treated with caution so

³¹⁸ Maas, J. (2018), pp. 24-25.

³¹⁹ ET-DH-018.

³²⁰ ET-DH-018.

³²¹ ET-DH-018.

³²² Camarda, S. (2018), p. 107-110; Scuto, D. (2015), p. 7; Camarda, S. (2020) « À nos braves »: les monuments aux légionnaires luxembourgeois entre conflit et réconciliation. In: S. Camarda et al. (eds.) *Légionnaires: Parcours de Guerre et de Migrations entre le Luxembourg et la France*. Milano: Silvana Editoriale, p. 189.

as not to upset the post-war narrative, even by omitting these facts in the memorialisation of the victims (see Chapter 8).

4.8 Luxembourgish involvement in the Allied forces

For much of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Luxembourg was a land of emigration. Being a relatively poor and rural country before the boom of the steel industry, a vast number of the population decided to move abroad hoping for a better life and fortune. Popular destinations were Romania, the United States, areas of South America but also neighbouring France. It is estimated that as many as 72,000 out of a population of 212,800 had left Luxembourg between 1841 and 1891, forming significant settler colonies, for example in Paris or Chicago.³²³ With the outbreak of WWI, it was predominantly those Luxembourgish expatriates or those of Luxembourgish parentage living abroad that answered the call to arms by enlisting in the armies of combatant nations.

The first section will focus on the Luxembourgish colony in France and their service in the *Légion étrangère*, including their motivations and circumstances. Here, new research by Arnaud Sauer and Joé Bellion are of particular interest. The second section will cover Luxembourgers in other armies, such as the US, Belgian, British, Canadian, and even the Italian army. Their military action or deployment location in the *Légion étrangère* or other armies will not be discussed in this thesis as this does not form part of this PhD research. Different articles and studies are already available on this topic.³²⁴

4.8.1 La Légion étrangère

Luxembourgish involvement in the *Légion étrangère* is not unique to WWI, and for many it was not their first involvement either. Some among the older generation who served in WWI had already seen action in Morocco or French Indochina.³²⁵ A decree from 3rd August 1914 issued by the French government allowed foreigners to join the *Légion étrangère* starting 21st August of that year for the duration of the war, not being able to join the regular French Army for

³²³ Thewes, G. (2017), p. 12; p. 15.

³²⁴ See for example: Sauer, A. (2014) Les Luxembourgeois dans la Légion Étrangère durant la Première Guerre mondiale. In: B. Majerus et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 149-161.

³²⁵ Scuto, D. (2018b) Français de coeur parce que Luxembourgeois, *Tageblatt*, 14 July, p. 5.

issues of nationality. Various expatriate communities took this opportunity to play an active part and to fight for their adoptive country. Similarly, a group of Luxembourgish expatriates responded to this decree and actively encouraged others to enlist, putting up patriotic and pro-French recruitment posters with the words “*Vive la France! Vive le Luxembourg!*” printed in big bold letters, in the streets of Paris.³²⁶

Luxembourgers living in and around Paris were among the first to enlist. It was reported that 3,000 Luxembourgers marched to *Les Invalides* in Paris on 21st August 1914 to volunteer.³²⁷ This number is likely exaggerated as the accounts also mention women and children, who might have joined the march in support. More Luxembourgish expatriates reported to recruitment offices in the Lorraine region, in particular in Nancy, where a considerable number of Luxembourgers had settled during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.³²⁸

One focal question that has already been researched by scholars is what motivated Luxembourgish expatriates to join a foreign army? As forwarded by Sauer, the most common argument for Luxembourgers’ engagement in the *Légion étrangère* was in response to the menace faced by their home country. After the attack on its neutrality status, they saw their country under threat of possibly losing their independence and being annexed by Germany. A sense of patriotism and fighting for their *patrie* can therefore be seen as a driving force for many behind their act of enlisting.³²⁹ A further motivation listed by Sauer is linked to how Luxembourgers regarded France as the best option against German expansionism. It has already been mentioned in this chapter, that a certain Francophilia was present before 1914, and many volunteers valued the principles embodied by the French Revolution and the French Republic in terms of their ideals of law, justice, and freedom. Germany was clearly seen as the aggressor and became synonymous with the words ‘hun’ or barbarian. While there was a certain degree of hate towards Germany in the hearts of many Luxembourgers, which seems like a leitmotiv according to Sauer, France and their allies stood for

³²⁶ Sauer, A. (2014), pp. 150-152.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

³²⁸ Bellion, J. (2013) Luxemburger in der französischen Armee während des Ersten Weltkriegs. *Hémecht*, 65. Jg., n° 3, p. 270.

³²⁹ Sauer, A. (2014), p. 153.

the guarantors of the respect for peoples' rights.³³⁰ Even after the war, this leitmotiv of Germany as the aggressor wishing to assimilate the small country reappeared. At the inauguration of the *Monument du Souvenir* in 1923 (Chapter 6), General Lardemelle, governor of the French city of Metz, spoke of the Luxembourgish volunteers as being inspired by the hate against the invader who violated their unarmed neutrality.³³¹

However, it is this Francophilia which Bellion draws attention to when examining their motivations. He comments that many of these accounts and sources originated from Francophile Luxembourgish authors and should thus be read and evaluated critically.³³² Bellion's research introduces similar arguments than those by Sauer, which can be summarised in Douglas Porch's words: "Patriotism, love for France and ideology were strong among those in the first wave of enlistments".³³³ Nevertheless, Bellion questions to what extent these men can all be considered volunteers. He theorises that it could be possible that some felt pressured to enlist as volunteers, although no such case has been confirmed. Pressure from the French authorities, a sense of belonging, peer pressure at work or within the community, or even the fear of being considered to be a German sympathiser, might all have played a role in some cases.³³⁴ Aside from a few instances where accounts and memoirs exist, the personal motivations of most of these men remain unknown and can therefore not be generalised.

In terms of numbers, the figure of 3,000 Luxembourgers in the *Légion étrangère* is the most commonly published and accepted; however, as will be elaborated in section 4.11 in relation to the post-war narrative, this figure has been questioned.

4.8.2 Luxembourgers in other Allied armies

With the United States entering the war in 1917, another group of Luxembourgish migrants of first, second or even third generation came face to

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

³³¹ As cited in Sauer, A. (2014), p. 154.

³³² Bellion, J. (2017) Im Grande Guerre auf Seiten Frankreichs? Luxemburger in der französischen Armee während des Ersten Weltkriegs. In: T. Kolnberger et al (eds.) *Krieg in der industrialisierten Welt*. Wien: Caesarpress, p. 459.

³³³ As cited in Bellion, J. (2017), p. 460.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

face with the horrors of war as part of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) under General of the Armies John Joseph Pershing. A small number of those expatriates even returned to Luxembourg shortly after the Armistice as part of the 33rd Infantry Division (Illinois Division) when US troops occupied the country after the retreat of the German troops.³³⁵

Figures of Luxembourg-Americans who fought in WWI are difficult to determine due to possible inaccuracies of some records, lack of information or even duplications. Some sources might only include Luxembourg-born individuals while others also include second or even third generation expatriates of Luxembourgish origin. The English edition of Nicola Gonner's "*Luxemburger in der neuen Welt*" from 1987 lists 682 names for the US Army as cited in Fausto Gardini's "*Storms over Luxembourg*".³³⁶ On the other spectrum, in the same book, Gardini claims to have found around 1,800 Luxembourgers and Americans of Luxembourgish descent "who completed draft cards and/or served in military services of the United States of America"³³⁷ whereas David Heal's estimate in his 2007 published book "*Luxembourgers in the First World War: an inventory*" is around 1,200 individuals.³³⁸

The next largest contingent of Luxembourgers, or of Luxembourgish descent, can be found in the Belgian Army. In December 1918, Luxembourgish daily newspaper *Escher Tageblatt* quoted an article from *L'Indépendance Belge* praising the gallant acts of the Luxembourgish heroes. The article stated that according to the *Bulletin des Luxembourgeois de l'armée belge*, there were more than a thousand, ranging from the simple soldier to the highest ranks, who served under the Belgian flag.³³⁹ This number is quite an exaggeration as more recent estimates fall closer to 200 or 230, but with Heal also commenting that there might be others who served and survived without being wounded or receiving a medal and thus disappearing into obscurity without further records.³⁴⁰ For the British Army, the number is estimated at five, but here again uncertainties are noted by Heal with different records providing insufficient

³³⁵ Thill, M. (n.d.) "Jongen, huelt iech do eng Fra". *Luxemburger Wort*.

³³⁶ Gardini, F. (2012), p. 106.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

³³⁸ Heal, D. (2017) *Luxembourgers in the First World War: an inventory*. Independently published, p. 2.

³³⁹ *Escher Tageblatt*, n° 352 (18.12.1918), p. 2.

³⁴⁰ Heal, D. (2017), p. 2; p. 7; Reitz, J. and Remesch, A. (2017), p. 35.

information or raising doubts. Additionally, Heal listed two names for the Italian Army and 13 for the Canadian Army.³⁴¹

Even though exact numbers remain unclear, there is no doubt that a still considerable number of Luxembourgish expatriates of first, second or third generation enlisted in the Allied forces. Nevertheless, the focus and interest remain on the Luxembourgers in the *Légion étrangère*, in other words the *légionnaires*, judging by the literature available on each foreign army mentioned above. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, this is also reflected in Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI, with the *légionnaires* taking up centre stage, followed by those in the Belgian Army.

4.9 Luxembourgers in the Imperial German Army

A fact that is almost entirely non-existent and neglected in Luxembourg's historiography and collective memory of WWI is that, though small in number, Luxembourgers fought in the Imperial German Army. Detailed information, especially within secondary literature or on an academic level, is therefore hard to find. The accompanying catalogue of the exhibition "*Lëtzebuerg an den Éischte Weltkrich*" briefly mentions Jean-Pierre Reinert, whose father was Luxembourgish, who grew up in Germany and as admirer of the Kaiser volunteered in the German Army. Additionally, the book mentions Prince Félix of Bourbon-Parma, husband of Grand Duchess Charlotte and brother-in-law of Emperor Karl I of Austria, who served as lieutenant and later captain in the Austrian Dragoons.³⁴²

David Heal's aforementioned book also provides some information and list of names about Luxembourgish involvement on the German side, but it is Leo Elcheroth's Bachelor dissertation from 2015 at the University of Luxembourg, which presents a more in-depth study on this subject. As noted by Elcheroth, the topic of Luxembourgers in the Imperial German Army during WWI is very much under-researched, and not even covered as the centenary approached when many other new articles about different aspects of the war were published.

³⁴¹ Heal, D. (2017), p. 160-163.

³⁴² Reitz, J. and Remesch, A. (2017), pp. 43-44.

Elcheroth's study sheds light on the circumstances and reasons behind Luxembourgers' involvement in the Imperial German Army and makes the distinction between different groups, including some individual stories, the reaction and response of the Luxembourgish government, and an estimate number for each category.³⁴³

The first and biggest group consisted of Luxembourgers who had emigrated to Germany long before 1914. Elcheroth notes that their long residency in Germany and the ambiguous Article 17 N° 3 of the *Zivilgesetzbuches* (civil code), which German authorities used in their favour, saw these men stripped of their Luxembourgish nationality thereby rendering them stateless. This in turn made it possible for the German authorities to draft them into the army. Elcheroth points out different cases in which those affected protested against what can only be described as forced and illegal conscription through petitions and letters sent to the Luxembourgish and German governments, and emissaries in Berlin. One of the cases mentioned actually resulted in a discharge, for others the situation could be improved as they were moved from the trenches to do civil service or received leave of absence until their case could be concluded. In other instances, even though they were drafted into the army, it is not certain how many were engaged in active military action.³⁴⁴

The second group was made up of those residing in Luxembourg who due to mix-ups, adverse circumstances, or lack of thorough investigation by German authorities were conscripted into the army for shorter or longer duration. Elcheroth refers to some Luxembourgers who were arrested by the German military authority due to their openly pro-French attitude, suspicion of espionage activities or even insults. Among the people arrested were, however, also German, French, and Belgian nationals living and working in Luxembourg. Only two Luxembourgers were arrested because of 'military obligation', but released a couple of days later, indicating a possible confusion of identity. Furthermore, Elcheroth mentions stateless residents in Luxembourg, often of German descent who became stateless due to their long absence from the

³⁴³ Elcheroth, L. (2015) *Luxemburger Staatsbürger in der deutschen Armee (Ende 19. Jahrhundert-1918)*. Bachelor dissertation at Université du Luxembourg (unpublished), p. 6.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-18; p. 55.

German Empire, had to serve in the German Army. However, as these were already viewed as stateless, it is difficult to consider them as Luxembourgish even though they were born or resided in Luxembourg.³⁴⁵

The third group is made up of Luxembourgers living in Alsace-Lorraine, which at the time was part of the German Empire. These men were given the choice by the German authorities between adopting the nationality of Alsace-Lorraine or those within public offices would lose their positions. The choice they were given was more of an ultimatum and it can therefore be assumed that some felt pressured to relinquish their Luxembourgish nationality and reluctantly joined the German forces. Without their Luxembourgish nationality, they also had no means to get further help from the government.³⁴⁶

Similar to the situation in other foreign armies, the exact number of Luxembourgers or people of Luxembourgish descent who fought on the German side, either as volunteers, coerced or forcibly conscripted, can only be estimated. Heal estimates no more than 50 in the German Imperial Army.³⁴⁷ Yet, according to Elcheroth's study, the Luxembourgish government was aware of no less than 170 'stateless' Luxembourgers living in Germany who were conscripted. Figures about those residing in Luxembourg, either of Luxembourgish nationality or considered stateless, and who were arrested are estimated to be a few dozen. With regard to the situation in Alsace-Lorraine, only two cases could be confirmed, but a higher number cannot be excluded.³⁴⁸ Overall, it is difficult to determine how many actually saw active military service, as in some cases there is not enough information as to what happened to them after being drafted.

Apart from the aforementioned Jean-Pierre Reinert, Elcheroth also names another individual who volunteered in the Imperial German Army: Joseph Reuter-Reding, who had always shown a very pro-German attitude, even later on in the 1930s and WWII. However, Elcheroth comments that it would be difficult to know how many of Luxembourgish parentage joined the German side out of conviction as these men would not have asked the Luxembourgish government for help against

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-22; p. 55.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

³⁴⁷ Heal, D. (2017), p. 2.

³⁴⁸ Elcheroth, L. (2015), pp. 13; 25; 56.

their unlawful conscription and therefore did not leave behind a paper trail to investigate this further.³⁴⁹

Elcheroth also makes the distinction between those who were drafted into the army for military service and those who were used for forced labour, or *Heeresarbeit*. The Luxembourgish government knew of around 30 people living in Belgium, either born in or emigrated to the *Province du Luxembourg* (the part of Belgium that belonged to Luxembourg before the partition of 1839) and who were considered as stateless by German authorities, and deported for forced labour. More cases like these in other countries can also not be excluded. Moreover, a very small number of Luxembourgers were also subjected to forced labour due to a loose interpretation of Article 52 of the Hague Convention IV³⁵⁰ to which the Luxembourgish government also protested as they saw it as noncompliant to the rules and demanded the dismissal of those affected.³⁵¹

Despite this more detailed study on an otherwise neglected subject, what is missing from Elcheroth's dissertation, and in fact from any other source that briefly mentions this topic, is anything related to memorialisation and commemoration, or in this case the lack thereof, and whether these men should also be considered Luxembourgish victims of war.

4.10 Luxembourg after the Armistice

With the end of the war came an uncertain time for Luxembourg externally as much as internally, its monarchy facing the possible same end as the German and Austro-Hungarian empires. Fuelled by similar revolutionary movements occurring in Germany and Austria, the day before the signing of the Armistice, a small uprising led by socialists and trade unions demanded the abdication of the grand duchess in favour of a republic, along with other social and economic

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19; 21; 25.

³⁵⁰ Article 52 Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 18 October 1907: Requisitions in kind and services shall not be demanded from municipalities or inhabitants except for the needs of the army of occupation. They shall be in proportion to the resources of the country, and of such a nature as not to involve the inhabitants in the obligation of taking part in military operations against their own country. Such requisitions and services shall only be demanded on the authority of the commander in the locality occupied. Contributions in kind shall as far as possible be paid for in cash; if not, a receipt shall be given and the payment of the amount due shall be made as soon as possible. From International Humanitarian Law Databases.

³⁵¹ Elcheroth, L. (2015), pp. 26-30; 43.

reforms. The motion to proclaim a republic was defeated by the *Chambre des Députés* with 21 to 19 votes and three abstentions but a referendum was to be held in the near future.³⁵² As noted by Jean-Louis Scheffen, the political and social turmoil at the time explained why the signing of the Armistice slightly slipped into the background with the country's internal issues featuring as the main headlines in the national press.³⁵³

Under the leadership of General Pershing, the 5th Infantry Division Red Diamond and the 33rd Infantry Division entered Luxembourg on 21st November 1918. This was followed by French troops on 22nd November 1918 under Lieutenant-Colonel Randier, resulting in a double administration. Shortly after, French Maréchal Foch set up his headquarters in the capital. While the US troops retreated again from May 1919 onwards, even taking Luxembourgish brides with them, the French remained in Luxembourg until December 1923, partially because of the ongoing unrest.³⁵⁴

Many of the Entente Powers criticised the passive resistance of Luxembourg's government as well as the conduct of the royal court during the war. Luxembourg's young sovereign Grand Duchesse Marie-Adélaïde was seen as a *persona non grata* within foreign policy and among the population despite never betraying her country or violating her constitutional rights. Just as had already happened several times in the past, the question about what to do with Luxembourg reemerged. Even while the war was still ongoing, Belgium expressed its wishes to integrate the small grand duchy into its own borders. France equally contemplated a possible annexation. US President Woodrow Wilson's policy of political self-determination even for small nations was one of the reasons why Belgium did not manage to fulfil its goal after the war.³⁵⁵ Unlike the previous treaties that established the independent and neutral grand duchy, the future of Luxembourg was now in the hands of its people, and not decided by the great powers of Europe.

³⁵² Scheffen, J-L. (2018) Steiniger Weg aus Krieg und Krise. *Luxemburger Wort - Die Warte*, n°30/2594, 8 November, pp. 4-5.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

³⁵⁴ Kreins, J-M. (2008), pp. 89-91; Reitz, J. and Remesch, A. (2017), pp. 84-85.

³⁵⁵ Kreins, J-M. (2008), pp. 89-91; Majerus, B. and Roemer, C. (2015); Scheffen, J-L. (2018), pp. 6-7; Calmes, C and Bossaert, D. (1996), p. 312.

To secure its independence and autonomy, the Luxembourgish government under Prime Minister Émile Reuter made sure to divorce itself from Germany. Consequently, in December 1918 Luxembourg officially left the *Zollverein* and cancelled the railway contracts it had with Germany since 1872. Other equity links with German industries and banks were also dissolved. Unable to survive on its own, Luxembourg had to find new economic partners. Thus, after decades of being in the German economic sphere, a reorientation towards the west followed.³⁵⁶

In January 1919 a '*coup d'état*' was attempted to proclaim a republic once again. However, this action was short lived as the general population did not join in, with the French troops intervening as well. The following day, and to calm down the unrest, the government announced that Grand Duchesse Marie-Adélaïde would abdicate in favour of her younger sister Charlotte and that the people could shape the future of the country in the upcoming referendum.³⁵⁷

The double referendum held on 28th September 1919 was critical for Luxembourg's political and economic orientation. On one side, the referendum asked the population if it wished an economic union with Belgium or France; on the other side, if the population wanted to uphold the monarchy with Grand Duchesse Charlotte as head of state, a different sovereign, a change of dynasty or even a republic. The results of the 1919 referendum clearly showed that the people preferred a union with France and to retain the monarchy, with 80% of the population voting in favour of Grand Duchesse Charlotte. By saving the Nassau-Weilburg dynasty, the people of Luxembourg also saved and reinforced their own independence. Henceforth, the grand duchess was put on an equal footing with the principle of independence, a notion that would become of great importance again in WWII.³⁵⁸ The economic union between France and Luxembourg was in the end not feasible, as it would otherwise create tensions between France and Belgium. Ultimately, Luxembourg formed an economic union with Belgium in 1921, the *Union économique belgo-luxembourgeoise*.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁶ Scheffen, J-L. (2018), p. 6; Calmes, C. and Bossaert, D. (1996), p. 319-320.

³⁵⁷ Scheffen, J-L. (2018), pp. 6-7.

³⁵⁸ Calmes, C. and Bossaert, D. (1996), p. 309; pp. 315-317.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 317-320.

All in all, the end of WWI resulted in significant and decisive consequences for Luxembourg on many levels. With its monarchy and independence secured, an economic reorientation towards the west, the population could shift its attention to the memorialisation and commemoration of the Luxembourgish combatants in the foreign armies and the victims of the aerial attacks in the capital. Even though Luxembourg's neutrality was called into question giving the Allies the justification for the attacks, and the events from November 1918 and the months that followed playing out as if Luxembourg belonged to the defeated Central Powers³⁶⁰, a different picture started to form during the interwar period.

4.11 One of the Allies?

Before examining and discussing examples of Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI in the post-war era, it is necessary to draw attention to the narrative that was constructed. This narrative tells a more comfortable version of Luxembourg during WWI, albeit not always accurate and at times even exaggerated, as is generally the case with myth-building. A fragmented historiography and general lack of interest for WWI for most of the past century has certainly aided this narrative to remain uncontested for decades, having nested itself into the nation's collective memory.

Post-1918, after facing internal and external political turmoil and the risk of being annexed by France or Belgium, this new narrative slowly surfaced that put Luxembourg clearly on the side of the Allies from the start of the war. Mainly constructed by Francophiles, this post-war narrative is further mirrored and anchored in Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI as will be illustrated and discussed in this thesis. This is not only supported by the memorials and commemorative practices but even by the simple act of renaming streets in the 1920s and 1930s to reflect a different version of events (see Chapter 5). Through something as simple and mundane as street names, Luxembourg secured a place within history that it did in fact not hold, namely alongside the Allies, as remarked by Scuto.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

³⁶¹ Scuto, D. (2018a) Éischte Weltkrich: La Grande Guerre au Luxembourg. *Tageblatt*, 21 April, p. 6.

New research, publications, exhibitions, and a newfound greater interest in this era of Luxembourg's past in recent years has, however, managed to shed new light or present different perspectives on various aspects of Luxembourg during WWI. Furthermore, it has allowed for this widespread narrative of Luxembourg as one of the Allies to be unravelled, challenged, and scrutinised, slowly providing a more realistic picture. This might of course lead to talking about hitherto taboos, reveal some inconvenient truths or challenge accepted beliefs that certainly would not fit the post-war narrative. However, as underlined by Scuto, "we cannot only sugarcoat history, but we must tell it all and correctly."³⁶²

One important element is the discrepancy around the actual number of Luxembourgers who fought and died during the conflict. While in 1918 the number of Luxembourgers in the Belgian Army was said to be more than a thousand, it has already been mentioned above that it was closer to 200. Moreover, for the past century, the generally accepted number of Luxembourgish *légionnaires* is 3,000. Even though this number has been questioned in the past - Jacques Dollar put the number of 3,000 men forward yet added that only about 900 would have been fit for service³⁶³ - it was still this figure of 3,000 that circulated and was printed repeatedly in books or newspaper articles, engraving itself in people's mind. In reality, the exact number of combatants remains unknown, for either side of the trenches.³⁶⁴ So, where does this number of 3,000 Luxembourgish volunteers on the French side come from and how did it become so widespread?

To answer this, we need to circle back to the post-war narrative. According to Scuto, it can be asserted that "within the framework of the political instrumentalisation of the *légionnaires* forwarded by the government, the figures were amplified to emphasise the fact that the Luxembourgish 'people' were on the side of the Allies."³⁶⁵ This was also underlined in Hendry Brousse's recent PhD thesis titled "*Le Luxembourg de la guerre à la paix (1918-1923) - La*

³⁶² As cited in Hentschel, U. (2018).

[Own translation]

³⁶³ As cited in Bellion, J. (2017), p. 457.

³⁶⁴ Scuto, D. (2018b), p. 5.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.5.

[Own translation]

France, actrice majeure de cette transition". With reference to only two WWI memorials from the interbellum, both memorials are presented as prime examples of how Luxembourg secured a place among the victors through the figure of the *légionnaire* as well as visible traces of the Franco-Luxembourgish relationship, showcasing a clear affirmation of Francophilia at the time.³⁶⁶ Hence, there seems to be a clear connection between the narrative, Luxembourg's relationship with France, the figure of 3,000 *légionnaires* and, as will be elaborated in the next chapters, the memorialisation thereof.

With the figure of 3,000 widely spread and accepted as part of the narrative, what were then the accepted truths regarding the total number of deaths? In accordance with the narrative, it can be argued that the number of deaths was probably magnified to highlight the sacrifice Luxembourg made in their fight against the German aggressors at the front. An article by journalist Josy Braun is a good example of this. The article asserts that out of those 3,000 volunteers an astounding 2,500 'bit the dust' at Verdun; a percentage not even matched by WWII, according to Braun.³⁶⁷ Not only is this number of casualties highly exaggerated and unlikely but placing them all at Verdun is also doubtful. On one side Verdun links them directly to one of the key battles of the French Army, on the other side Verdun might be the place most Luxembourgers associate with the Western Front given its proximity. Jules Stoffels quotes similar figures in his article in *d'Letzebuenger Land*: the number of 3,000 reappears, although as the total number of volunteers of which 95% were part of the *Légion étrangère* (Stoffels does not elaborate on the remaining 5 %) with a total of deaths risen to 2,700.³⁶⁸ With both articles published in 1985 (Stoffels) and 1999 (Braun) respectively, it clearly underlines that the narrative regarding the volunteers was passed on, repeated and accepted for decades, up until only recently.

Joé Bellion's recent research on Luxembourgers in the *Légion étrangère* has revealed very different results thereby contesting the generally accepted number.³⁶⁹ Bellion's extensive research concluded that it was an estimated 1,047

³⁶⁶ Brousse, H. (2019) *Le Luxembourg de la guerre à la paix (1918-1923). La France, actrice majeure de cette transition*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Université du Luxembourg and Université de Lorraine, pp. 246-256.

³⁶⁷ Braun, J. (1999) "Meng" Gëlle Fra. *Ons Stad*, n° 60, p. 28.

³⁶⁸ Stoffels, J. (1985) A l'ombre de la «Gëlle Fra». *D'Letzebuenger Land*, n° 30, p. 7.

³⁶⁹ Bellion, J. (2017), pp. 451–470.

Luxembourgish *légionnaires* that fought under the flag of the *Légion étrangère*. Out of these 1,047 men, 332 survived and 382 died in the war; a fraction of the numbers quoted by Braun and Stoffels. The fate of the remaining 333 men is still unknown. Lack of resources makes it difficult to determine what happened to those remaining 333 men as well as to find out more details on those who survived the war, as mentioned by Bellion.³⁷⁰

While Bellion's research provides a more accurate picture of Luxembourgers within the *Légion étrangère*, it is still unclear what the assumed number of 3,000 accounts for. Bellion suggests that this number might include the volunteers within the *Légion étrangère* in addition to Luxembourgers who had since acquired the French nationality and would have been drafted into other parts of the French Army. Another possibility is that this number accounts for all Luxembourgers within the different Entente forces, including Belgium, British, US and Canadian armies.³⁷¹

What becomes clear from these variations regarding the Luxembourgish volunteers and casualties, is that more extensive research in this field is required. This would serve two main purposes. Firstly, it would allow answering the remaining open questions surrounding the numbers of Luxembourgish volunteers and casualties within other Entente forces, and even those within the Imperial German Army. Secondly, it would help to further scrutinise the post-war narrative and paint a more accurate picture of Luxembourg's participation in and experience of WWI. While my thesis recognises the need for this type of research, it does not intend to delve deeper into this matter as it is outside of its scope.

In the context of the *légionnaires*, attention must also be given to the *Médaille des volontaires luxembourgeois de la Grande Guerre de 1914-1918* due to the strong symbolic link to France through the figure of legendary John the Blind of the House of Luxembourg³⁷², or *Jean l'Aveugle* in French, who died at the Battle of Crécy in 1346 fighting for France and considered one of Luxembourg's

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 468.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

³⁷² The House of Luxembourg was the royal family of the Holy Roman Empire, ruling as Holy Roman emperors and kings of Bohemia, Croatia, Hungary from 1308 to 1437.

national heroes. During the interbellum, several Luxembourgish *légionnaires* received French military medals of honour such as the *Médaille militaire française* which dates back to 1853, or the *Croix de guerre française* created in 1915. At this time Luxembourg, as an officially neutral country, did not have its own national military medals or decorations. To counteract this, other means of paying homage to the *légionnaires* were set in motion. For instance, the *légionnaires* were given silver or gold watches with personalised engravings by several local communities or associations.³⁷³ François Reinert remarks that this need to show their recognition to these *légionnaires* is interesting as many of these men had since long left Luxembourg in pursuit of a new life in France, many of them likely even having lost most connections to their former home country. According to Reinert, this can be interpreted as a ‘heroisation’ of these men and a form of political recuperation or appropriation of their involvement in the different forces of the Entente, in particular the *Légion étrangère*. The importance that the government also granted the creation of a special commemorative medal should also be viewed in like manner.³⁷⁴

This special commemorative medal, with a corresponding certificate, took the form of a bronze medal literally and symbolically unifying the *légionnaires* of 1914-1918 to John the Blind. One side of the medal shows the equestrian seal of John the Blind with the words *LUCEMBVRGVM VIRTVTI*, the date 1346 and Crécy also engraved, while the other side shows a WWI French helmet with the date 1914-1918 adorned by laurel and oak branches, and the names Marne-Meuse, Yser-Vardar, Aisne, and Somme.³⁷⁵ This association with John the Blind is of particular importance as it served to further testify the enduring relationship to France; simultaneously, the Luxembourgish *légionnaires* acquired an almost myth-like status, as remarked by Arnaud Sauer.³⁷⁶

³⁷³ Reinert, F. (2020) La Médaille des Volontaires luxembourgeois de la Grande Guerre. In: S. Camarda et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198; p. 212.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198; p. 212.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-207.

³⁷⁶ Sauer, A. (2014), p. 159.

4.12 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide the historical context to Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI, and how the historical narrative shifted from Luxembourg being a neutral and passive victim sitting in the waiting room of war to becoming one of the Allies. Luxembourg's ambiguous neutrality during WWI, the post-war narrative and the discrepancy surrounding the number of volunteers and subsequent myth-building should thus be considered and remembered when examining Luxembourg's attitudes and efforts towards memorialisation and commemoration, along with its collective memory, from the interwar period up to this day.

It is believed that additional extensive research and critical analysis of Luxembourg's war memorialisation, and commemorative practices, as proposed in this thesis not only contribute to the fragmented historiography of WWI, but moreover help to reshape the narrative. Accordingly, the subsequent chapter will introduce Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI.

Chapter 5 War memorialisation in Luxembourg

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is threefold: firstly, it serves to introduce the memorialisation of WWI in Luxembourg, before Chapter 6, 7, 8 and 9 focus on the selected case studies. To do this, this chapter provides a short background and context to war memorialisation in Luxembourg. The rather scant historiography on Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI is also addressed highlighting the considerable gap on this subject. Secondly, it summarises the findings of my research which are elaborated in both the inventory and location maps, as well as the upcoming case studies in the following chapters. Lastly, it elaborates on war memorialisation in general terms expanding on Chapter 2 by taking a closer look at street names which count among the types of war memorials this research focuses on and which have been defined in this thesis as being at the intersection of memorialisation and commemoration. The analysis of WWI commemorative street names in Luxembourg will show a close correlation with the case studies, in particular in relation to how the post-war narrative is mirrored in Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI.

5.2 History and historiography

War memorials of different sizes and forms, and with varying functionalities, are scattered the length and breadth of Luxembourg. Virtually every village, town or city likely features at least one sort of war memorial, be this the typical *Monument aux Morts* usually situated at the local town hall, cemetery or church, or a simple memorial plaque. Some localities even have multiple memorials such as the commune of Pétange where there are no less than twelve war memorials.³⁷⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 2, this abundance in war memorials can also be observed in most other European countries. What however differs is the conflict that is being remembered; in Luxembourg there is an undeniable

³⁷⁷ See full list: Commune de Pétange (2024) *Tourisme: Monuments à Pétange*.

dominance of WWII memorialisation and commemoration overshadowing that of WWI.

Elsewhere it has been noted that there are over 500 memorials of different types dedicated to WWII in Luxembourg, a truly impressive number. The number for WWI memorials is but a fraction of this. This imbalance also becomes apparent when looking at the statistical figures of the different types of memorials and monuments alone in Luxembourg City. Of 127 commemorative structures referred to in a short article by Sonja Kmec from 2009, almost 40% are dedicated to WWII.³⁷⁸ With only seven identified WWI memorials in Luxembourg City during my research (not including street names), they only make up for around 5%. With such a plethora of WWII memorials, it is perhaps not surprising that WWI memorialisation studies becomes but an afterthought.

5.2.1 War memorials in Luxembourg before 1914

In contrast to other European countries, Luxembourg does not have a long-standing tradition and history of grand and opulent nationally unifying memorials or monuments, even less those commemorating wars or battles. The lack of national monuments is hardly surprising considering that Luxembourg only developed a truly unique national identity decades after it gained independence. The few early national monuments that existed pre-1914 were usually in relation to authors or poets such as the *Monument Dicks-Lentz* dedicated to Edmond de la Fontaine (known under his pseudonym Dicks) and Michel Lentz, who wrote the text for Luxembourg's national anthem.³⁷⁹ Others were in honour of Luxembourg's sovereigns such as the bronze equestrian statue of William II, who held the dual title of King of the Netherlands and Grand Duke of Luxembourg, and who granted Luxembourg its first parliamentary constitution.

The *Colonne de l'Indépendance* in Mersch can be considered the first truly national monument. To celebrate the centenary since the Treaty of London of 1839, an almost 15 m high column was erected at the geographical centre of the

³⁷⁸ Kmec, S. (2009) Les monuments de la Ville de Luxembourg. In: P. Bousch et al. (eds.) *Der Luxembourg Atlas/Atlas du Luxembourg*. Cologne: Emons, p. 44.

³⁷⁹ Schoentgen, M. (2001) Denkmäler zur Erinnerung an den Zweiten Weltkrieg. forum, n° 211, p. 44.

country as a symbol of Luxembourg's independence. The column's planned inaugural event on 1st October 1939 never took place due to the start of WWII a month prior. Without having been officially inaugurated, the monument was demolished by the Nazis a year later in 1940; only the stump of the column, the four bronze coats of arms and a memorial plaque were saved. Maintaining these surviving elements of the old column and adding a new memorial plaque with a text recalling the destruction, the renamed *Monument National de l'Indépendance* was reconstructed as an obelisk and inaugurated in June 1959. The old stump of column is situated about 50 m away from this new national monument.³⁸⁰ Nevertheless, as commented by Guy Pauly, this national monument seems to be largely forgotten and was never part of any official ceremonies or commemorative events, contrary to the WWII memorial at the local church in Mersch.³⁸¹

Despite being involved in, or rather more often than not, being dragged into various wars during its period of 'foreign domination' in the early-modern and modern era, Luxembourg and its population did not always experience the same level of military action or fighting as its neighbours or being the scene of major battles. While the population fell victim to raids by soldiers or epidemics during the Thirty Years' War, the preceding Eighty Years' War, also known as the Dutch Revolt, had a minimal effect on Luxembourg, primarily functioning as a locus for troop assembly.³⁸² This might thus support Batty Weber's stance that Luxembourg experiences conflicts differently to its neighbours (Chapter 4). Combined with an only slowly arising national sentiment and identity, this likely explains the relative lack of war memorials in Luxembourg pre-1914. Yet, there are still a few noteworthy monuments in Luxembourg with a distinct connection to conflicts predating WWI that should be considered at this stage.

Among the earliest monuments in Luxembourg that can be deemed a war memorial is the *Klëppelkrich Monument*, even though Marc Schoentgen does not specifically consider it as such, rather describing it as a modest monument which

³⁸⁰ INPA (2022) *Inventar der Baukultur im Großherzogtum Luxemburg, Gemeinde Mersch - Band 1*, pp. 89-92; Pauly, G. (2013) Le "Krounebiert" à Mersch: un monument de la Première guerre mondiale. *Nos cahiers: Lëtzebuurger Zäitschrëft fir Kultur*, 34. Jg., n° 3/4, pp. 265-276.

³⁸¹ Pauly, G. (2013), p. 275.

³⁸² Péporté, P. and SIP (2022), p. 12.

has contributed to the construction of a nationally influenced and almost mythical image of history.³⁸³ Inaugurated in 1899 in Clerveaux, this monument remembers the Peasants' War of 1798 against the French Republican regime after having occupied and annexed the former Southern Netherlands of the Low Countries, to which Luxembourg belonged at the time. As noted by Kmec, with only sources representing the Republican view surviving and silence imposed after the suppression of the uprising, it is difficult to determine to what extent this revolt, at which Luxembourgish peasants participated, was triggered by the forced enrolment into the French Army or motivated by religious resentments against anticlerical laws.³⁸⁴

Nonetheless, the *Klëppelkrich* is nowadays considered one of Luxembourg's *lieux de mémoire*.³⁸⁵ As described by Kmec, the *Klëppelkrich* became a symbol for religious resistance against a blasphemous regime, its events resurfacing from the 1840s onwards. The casualties of the *Klëppelkrich* have been celebrated as martyrs in Luxembourg, with another monument inaugurated in 1972 next to the capital's main cemetery, the *Cimetière Notre-Dame* in Limpertsberg.³⁸⁶ The monument stands at the location where 29 Luxembourgers were executed after the revolt. This peasant insurrection was even metaphorically and literally connected with the general strike and resistance against the Nazi regime and the forced conscription decree of 1942 given its similarity in theme and also its physical proximity to a significant WWII memorial, the *Hinzerter Kräiz*. Also known as *Monument National de la Résistance et de la Déportation* (National Monument of the Resistance and Deportation), this well-known WWII memorial symbolises and remembers the suffering of those who opposed the Nazi occupation and is located mere 220 m away on the other end of a street named *Allée des Résistants et des Déportés* (Alley of Resistance Fighters and Deportees). Along this same street is then also the *Monument du Maquis* remembering those Luxembourgers who fought alongside the Allies as volunteers

³⁸³ Schoentgen, M. (2001), p. 44.

³⁸⁴ Kmec, S. (2006) *Lieux de mémoire and the (de)construction of "identities"*. *Hémecht*, 58. Jg., n° 1, pp. 100-101.

³⁸⁵ Coined by Pierre Nora to designate an important and meaningful place, object or non-material entity that has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of a community. See Nora, P. and Kritzman, L. D. (1996) *Realms of memory: rethinking the French past*. Columbia University Press.

³⁸⁶ Kmec, S. (2006), pp. 100-101.

in the Maquis or the militia of the town Vianden against the Nazis.³⁸⁷ As will be discussed in Chapter 7, these memorials conveying a narrative of resistance are in close proximity to a grand WWI memorial, the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre*. Situated towards the back of the cemetery, and thus maybe also at the back of people's mind, this WWI memorial, despite its size, seems to dwarf in comparison to what can almost be viewed as a small commemorative precinct at the front of the cemetery.

Two further monuments, both erected at the *Cimetière du Val des Bons Malades* (locally known as *Sichenhaff*) in the old historic quarter of Pfaffenthal can be counted among the early examples of war memorials in Luxembourg before 1914. Both monuments have a direct connection to France and the Francophile community within Luxembourg, underlining the strong relationship between Luxembourg and France before WWI as noted in the previous chapter. The presence of these 'French monuments' at *Sichenhaff* then explains that the cemetery has been known in the past as the '*Franso'se Kirfecht*' - the French cemetery.³⁸⁸

The first monument with the inscription "*Honneur et patrie!*" located at the upper section of the cemetery, and inaugurated on 16th July 1874, remembers eight French soldiers who succumbed to their injuries while being treated in Luxembourgish hospitals during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. As an initiative by French expatriates residing in Luxembourg, the monument was funded by subscription, in which also some Luxembourgers participated.³⁸⁹ As printed in *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, "these unfortunate children of France who came to die on our hospitable land may now rest in peace."³⁹⁰ This statement clearly emphasises the good relationship between these countries at the time - a very different picture to the previous Peasants' War - though the involvement of French expatriates and possible Francophiles should be considered. A yearly commemorative and military ceremony organised by *Le*

³⁸⁷ Kmec, S. (2006), pp. 100-101; Dondelinger, P. (2008) Le glacis de la forteresse de Luxembourg, lieu(e) de mémoire nationale. *Hémecht*, 60. Jg., n° 1, pp. 43-46.

³⁸⁸ Aschmann, P. (1968) Friedhof am Montmartre. *Luxemburger Wort*, 121. Jg., n° 305/306, 31 October, p. 13.

³⁸⁹ *L'indépendance luxembourgeoise*, n° 196 (18.07.1874), p. 2.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[Own translation]

*Souvenir Français*³⁹¹, and with diplomatic representatives and members of the municipality present, took place at this monument on 1st November, however, without taking note of another monument located at the lower section of the cemetery, which is divided by railroad tracks.³⁹²

This second monument, the *Monument des Communards* remembers two French citizens part of Paris Commune of 1871³⁹³ who died in exile in Luxembourg in 1873. The Paris Commune also affected Luxembourg due to the large Luxembourgish community living in Paris during that time, many also falling victims to the repressions. This funerary monument was neglected and forgotten for many years before being rediscovered in 1926 by aforementioned Joseph Hansen (see Chapter 4).³⁹⁴ According to Henri Wehenkel, the monument was revived to rehabilitate the obscured memory of the 1871 uprising in Paris but also to give the socialist parties in Luxembourg an identity rooted in historical continuity. Since its rediscovery, yearly commemorative events take place in front of this memorial. After WWII, the *réfractaires* of *Ligue Ons Jongen* (those who evaded the forced conscription into the Wehrmacht often by staying in hiding) also joined the commemorative events.³⁹⁵

5.2.2 War memorialisation studies in Luxembourg

The cases mentioned above clearly confirm that war memorials were rare in Luxembourg before 1945, as also pointed out by Marc Schoentgen in his short article on WWII memorials. Interestingly, Schoentgen names the *Monument du Souvenir* - the famous *Gëlle Fra* - inaugurated in 1923 as the first real war memorial in Luxembourg.³⁹⁶ This statement is, however, not entirely accurate as three WWI memorials actually pre-date the *Monument du Souvenir*: the memorial plaque in Hamm (see Appendix 1), the memorial in Bonnevoie and the memorial plaque in Tétange (see Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 respectively).

³⁹¹ An association founded in 1887 with the aim of honouring the memory of all those who died for France, irrespective of nationality, and maintaining war memorials in and outside its borders. Luxembourg has its own delegation of *Le Souvenir Français*.

³⁹² Wehenkel, H. (2012) Commune de Paris (1871). In: S. Kmec and P. Péporté (eds.) *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg II: Jeux d'échelles*. Luxembourg: Éd. Saint-Paul, pp. 15.

³⁹³ The Paris Commune was a short-lived revolutionary government which seized power of Paris from March to May 1871 after France's defeat against Prussia. Its members are referred to as *communards*.

³⁹⁴ Wehenkel, H. (2012), pp. 13-18.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-18.

³⁹⁶ Schoentgen, M. (2001), p. 44.

Even though these are local products borne of local concerns and initiatives rather than national like the *Gëlle Fra*, they are still memorials dedicated to Luxembourgish WWI victims. Additionally, the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre*, a grand mausoleum for French soldiers who died on Luxembourgish soil, and which incorporates the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu*, Luxembourg's answer to the tomb of the unknown soldier (see Chapter 7) are also not mentioned among the WWI memorials in Schoentgen's article. Naturally, Schoentgen's article concentrates on WWII memorials and not WWI, yet the complete non-mention of other WWI memorials besides the *Gëlle Fra* is still noteworthy. This hints on one side at the significance attributed to this memorial and its gilded statue, and on the other side at the little attention given to other arresting WWI memorials in Luxembourg, and even less so to smaller WWI memorials.

The historiography on Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI is as scarce as the actual memorials themselves. Within secondary literature, the WWI memorials have not had great attention, either on their own or as a comparative study within or outside Luxembourg's borders. With most WWI literature and research largely focusing on political, social, cultural, or economic aspects, the study of Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI remains largely untouched. Even the recently published "*1914-1918: Guerre(s) au Luxembourg - Krieg(e) in Luxemburg*", which covers a myriad of fascinating topics related to WWI, does not have a dedicated chapter on war memorials.

Of the few WWI memorials that exist, the *Monument du Souvenir*, or *Gëlle Fra*, remains the most featured in articles, journals, books, or photographs. Different aspects of this famous national monument and in particular its gilded female statue have resulted in several publications over the past decades, be this in relation to its design and creator Claus Cito, its inauguration and critiques, its destruction by the Nazis, the statue's rediscovery and reconstruction in the 1980s or more recent events and polemics. Of particular interest are for instance publications by Paul Dostert³⁹⁷, Josy Braun³⁹⁸ or Guy May³⁹⁹, along with the

³⁹⁷ Dostert, P. (1999) Die Zerstörung der "Gëlle Fra" am 21. Oktober 1940. *Ons Stad*, n° 60, pp. 16–18.

³⁹⁸ Braun, J. (1999).

³⁹⁹ May, G. (1986) Gëlle Fra. *Eis Sprooch. Nei Folleg*. XXIV, n° 18, pp. 5–12.

accompanying catalogue of the exhibition “*d’Gëlle Fra*” held in 2010. Considered as a *lieu de mémoire* in Luxembourg, Benoît Majerus also discussed the memorial’s and the statue’s symbolism, significance, and place within the public.⁴⁰⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 1, the memorial’s centenary in 2023 also triggered additional coverage in press and media retelling not only the memorial’s turbulent history but also sharing lesser-known facts about the statue.

Moreover, this national war memorial features within the general literature on WWI, the interwar period, and the commemoration of the *légionnaires*. The accompanying catalogue of the free exhibition “*Légionnaires*” held at the *Musée Dräi Eechelen* from July 2021 to February 2022 explores different themes about those Luxembourgers who joined the *Légion étrangère*. The catalogue, as well as the exhibition - which I had the chance to visit in summer 2021 - therefore offers insights into the background of these *légionnaires*, the vast majority being expatriates living in France; Luxembourgish engagement in the *Légion étrangère* before 1914; and the different campaigns that Luxembourgish *légionnaires* were part of during WWI, including some individual stories. The catalogue then also covers the post-war period, different associations and help for veterans, as well as the memorialisation and commemoration of these men. This includes the commemorative book “*Livre D’Or de nos Légionnaires 1914-1918*”, as well as details on the aforementioned *Médaille commémorative de la Grande Guerre 1914-1918* (Chapter 4).

A separate chapter is dedicated to the different memorials remembering the *légionnaires* which, as phrased by Sandra Camarda, stand between conflict and reconciliation.⁴⁰¹ In this chapter, particular attention is given to the *Gëlle Fra*, the aforementioned French mausoleum and tomb of the unknown soldier, and the memorial in Bonnevoie. While also smaller WWI memorials, such as the memorial plaque in Tétange and Esch-sur-Alzette and the plaque in honour of cyclist François Faber (Chapter 9) are mentioned, the information on these plaques remains very limited, incomplete, and therefore also partially

⁴⁰⁰ Majerus, B. (2007) *D’Gëlle Fra*. In: S. Kmec et al. (eds.) *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg I: Usages du passé et construction nationale*. Luxembourg: Éd. Saint-Paul, pp. 291-296.

⁴⁰¹ Camarda, S. (2020), pp. 182-195.

inaccurate. This indicates that no in-depth research was undertaken into these smaller memorials that are all characterised by relocation without further discussing the impact such relocations entail, as this was understandably not the aim of that chapter, but which my research aims to address. Additionally, as the theme of the exhibition and catalogue concentrates on the *légionnaires*, it has as consequence that other memorials with no direct link to the *légionnaires* receive little to no attention. Consequently, the *Monument commémoratif Clausen-Neudorf* remembering the civilian victims of an aerial attack on 8th July 1918 (Chapter 8) only receives a brief mention in this catalogue, while the small memorial plaque in Walferdange remembering 71 US soldiers who died in Luxembourgish hospitals after the end of war (see Appendix 1) or the plaque for French aviator Alfred Furgerot shot down over Differdange (Chapter 9) remain unnamed. The catalogue also mentions a small brochure titled “*Nos Monuments après guerre 1918-1924*” published in the interwar period and available for purchase, including depictions of the *Gëlle Fra*, the French mausoleum and tomb, and also the memorial in Bonnevoie, yet the written information and descriptions remain on the former two, thereby stressing again their importance.⁴⁰²

Noteworthy are Léon Blasen’s short articles on memorials and monuments within the capital from 1985, though the focus or purpose of this series of articles is not on war memorialisation as it also includes other monumental structures and statues.⁴⁰³ His articles not only present a brief background and context, as well as short biography of the memorials selected, like the above-mentioned monument in Clausen and the plaque for François Faber, but Blasen also commented on elements such as location and changes that have impacted these memorials. However, given the brevity of these articles of no more than three to four pages, they generally lack further details or analysis of the elements addressed. Furthermore, these articles are from 1985 and thus do not present a current perspective or any changes that occurred in the last four decades.

⁴⁰² See AE 00682 for example of this brochure.

⁴⁰³ Blasen, L. (1985a) Die Denkmäler der Stadt Luxemburg – D’Gëlle Fra. *Télécran*, 7. Jg., n° 5, pp. 38–39; Blasen, L. (1985b) Die Denkmäler der Stadt Luxemburg – Die Gedenkplatte für den Radrennfahrer François Faber. *Télécran*, 7. Jg., n° 19, pp. 24–26; Blasen, L. (1985c) Die Denkmäler der Stadt Luxemburg – Das Fliegerdenkmal im Clausener Tiergarten. *Télécran*, 7. Jg., n° 20, pp. 35–38.

The digital exhibition “*Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*”, which itself can be seen as a modern form of memorialisation, also dedicates one chapter to how WWI has been remembered in Luxembourg in the immediate aftermath of the war, accentuating the impact of the post-war narrative. The chapter “*Remembering the War*” within the major theme “*Aftermath*” includes additional primary documents, such as the above-mentioned “*Livre d’Or*”, a variety of photographs and videos of events and memorials. This chapter even draws attention to commemorative street names. While the memorialisation and commemoration of Luxembourgers fighting in the Allied armies are highlighted, it also underlines the bombings by the Allies and its victims, however, without discussing any memorial in more detail. Elements such as their evolution from the interwar period to the present day, or relocations, are not analysed, which understandably was not the purpose of the exhibition or the dedicated chapter, but still demonstrates the lack of in-depth research into these war memorials.

The digital exhibition also allows visitors to explore the interactive map of Luxembourg that can be filtered according to date but also by type, including bombed sites, cemeteries, shelters, and memorials. This map constituted one of the main resources for the identification and location of WWI memorials during my research. Nevertheless, although the dedicated chapter expands on the theme of *légionnaires* when it comes to the memorialisation and commemoration of WWI, and its corresponding interactive map also listing smaller memorials and beyond the interwar period, not all WWI memorials identified during my research are named or listed, only featuring a total of nine. As illustrated in section 5.3 and through my own inventory and location maps of WWI memorials, the number of WWI memorials in Luxembourg goes far beyond nine. Additionally, some inaccuracies when it comes to the precise location of a couple of memorials were noted, which my thesis will also address in subsequent chapters.

In terms of maps, Sonja Kmec’s short article “*Monuments de la ville de Luxembourg*” also features a location map of Luxembourg City with a total of

127 commemorative structures, including monuments, plaques, and statues.⁴⁰⁴ Even though this map includes war memorials, the focus of this map, and by extension the article, is not on war memorials specifically. Consequently, the map also shows monuments connected to national history, to the monarchy, to Europe or art.

In all, what becomes evident from the existing literature and publications on WWI memorials in Luxembourg is that the memorials often only feature as a by-product of a wider subject or theme, such as Luxembourg during WWI, the post-war era, the *légionnaires*, or Luxembourgish memorials and monuments in general. As a result, what is missing is a detailed publication on the subject of WWI memorialisation in Luxembourg comprising all known WWI memorials covering the last hundred years, irrespective of what or who they remember.

This concept of Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI being just a by-product in most publications could also be observed in the aforementioned recent PhD thesis by Hendry Brousse. Brousse's thesis focuses on Luxembourg from 1918-1923, a time when French troops occupied the country after the retreat of the German troops. Much of the thesis therefore concentrates on Luxembourg in the immediate aftermath of the war and the Franco-Luxembourgish relationships during this time. When considering the memorial representation of the privileged relations between these two countries, as phrased by Brousse, attention is given to the *Gëlle Fra* and the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre*, both constructed during the presence of the French garrison. As will be further elaborated in subsequent chapters in my thesis, Brousse presents both memorials as visible traces of the Franco-Luxembourgish relationship, showcasing a clear affirmation of Francophilia at the time. Additionally, Brousse emphasises how Luxembourg secured a place among the victors through the figure of the *légionnaires*.⁴⁰⁵ Nevertheless, but understandably, Brousse does not analyse or discuss the memorials any further, presenting a concise but rather short biography of these two memorials, as they are just one component of wider themes and outside the scope of his topic.

⁴⁰⁴ Kmec, S. (2009), p. 45.

⁴⁰⁵ Brousse, H. (2019), pp. 246-256.

Looking at a more international level, it is once again only the *Gëlle Fra* that is mentioned in connection to Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI. "*Les Soldats Inconnus de la Grande Guerre*" presents a series of texts in French collected by François Cochet et Jean-Noël Grandhomme on different nations' attitude, decision, and realisation of their own tomb of the unknown soldier. As a comparative study of this type of war memorial, this book includes the unknown soldier of major nations such as France, the United Kingdom, the United States and also Germany. Smaller nations such as Poland, Slovenia, Greece, Serbia and even Luxembourg have separate chapters dedicated to their respective unknown soldier.

Nonetheless, instead of a chapter about Luxembourg's unknown *légionnaire* buried at the French mausoleum, Luxembourg is being presented as a nation who decided to build a memorial - the *Gëlle Fra* - without a tomb of the unknown soldier, but whose base contains soil from the battlefields on which the *légionnaires* died, presenting it as the way of how Luxembourg conceptualised the memory.⁴⁰⁶ Even though the *Gëlle Fra* commemorates Luxembourgers who fought on the side of the Allies, with debris and soil from the front walled up into the plinth during its construction in the 1920s, it is not Luxembourg's answer to or equivalent of the tomb of the unknown soldier. The chapter on Luxembourg's memorial concentrates on the design, location, inauguration, destruction by the Nazis, and reconstruction in the 1980s and the events involving the *Gëlle Fra* in recent years - similar to what will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 of my thesis. Yet, in "*Les Soldats Inconnus de la Grande Guerre*", the chapter fails to even mention that the *Gëlle Fra* was in fact briefly considered to incorporate the tomb of the unknown soldier, which was ultimately realised at the French mausoleum, hence completely neglecting to write about this mausoleum where the tomb is actually located.

Reading this collection of texts on the general theme of the tomb of the unknown soldier in various countries, it gives the wrong impression that Luxembourg does not have such a tomb. This demonstrates how little is known about Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI on a wider stage. This non-mention

⁴⁰⁶ Cochet, F. and Grandhomme, J-N. (eds.) (2012) *Les soldats inconnus de la Grande Guerre: la mort, le deuil, la mémoire*. SOTECA, 14-18 Éditions, p. 14; pp. 419-429.

of the tomb and the mausoleum is, however, perhaps not as surprising. As will be elaborated in Chapter 7, the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre* and the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu* seem to have declined in importance among the national population in recent decades, with even myself having no recollection of having heard or seen this memorial before this research. On the other hand, it seems somewhat ironic that a war memorial with a strong connection to France is not being mentioned in a collection of articles on the subject of the tomb of the unknown soldier written in French.

5.3 Findings

My research has concluded that there are at least 19 memorials dedicated to WWI, either on their own or in conjunction with WWII, located throughout Luxembourg, thereby exceeding the total number of nine listed on the interactive map of the digital exhibition. Out of these 19 memorials, 12 can be classified as monuments, such as an obelisk, column, tomb, or mausoleum, with the remaining seven constituting memorial plaques (see Map 1 and Map 2, see Appendix 2 for larger versions, see Appendix 1 for full list). Eight memorials have a dual function commemorating both world wars, and in the case of the *Gëlle Fra* also other conflicts that Luxembourgers participated in. Even though not counted as a Luxembourgish WWI memorial for reasons aforementioned (see Chapter 2), a special mention needs to be given to the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof* in Clausen.

As evident by my inventory listing all identified WWI memorials - as well as the commemorative street names to be discussed below - a clear dominance of the *légionnaires* as well as the union between Luxembourg and France become apparent, supporting the widely accepted theory that the post-war narrative and the almost myth-building of the *légionnaires* are highly mirrored in Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI. This is already exemplified solely by considering the memorial plaques.

Out of a total of seven, six plaques are dedicated to fallen soldiers, either Luxembourgish *légionnaires* or part of the Allies, having died either during or shortly after the conflict. The seventh plaque is dedicated to Luxembourg City

for their efforts during the war rather than individual people. This plaque still illustrates that bond to France as it serves a dual function as a memorial plaque as well as a medal of honour awarded by France.

In terms of geographical distribution, seven memorials are situated in Luxembourg City, four in the former industrial south, with the remaining scattered throughout the country. Looking at the date of inauguration, eight war memorials originate from the interwar period; however, this number could be higher considering that for a few memorials no records indicating the date of creation or inauguration could be found.

The results also indicate that a number of memorials came into existence only post 1945, often with names and inscription related to WWI added to new WWII memorials in an effort to memorialise both world wars, with a few even installed relatively recent. The most recent memorial dates from 2013 and is situated in Fischbach, commemorating all victims from both world wars. War memorials are thus not confined to the immediate years after a conflict has ended while still present in the living memory of those who experienced it, but war memorialisation can go far beyond that time. This supports Login's argument that war memorials are part of an ongoing tradition of memorialisation and not limited to the few years following a conflict; memorialisation is thus a process and not just an event.⁴⁰⁷

The total number of WWI memorials identified during this research can even be expanded when also taking into account commemorative streets names with an association with WWI (see Map 1 and Map 2, see Appendix 2 for larger versions, see Appendix 1 for full list). The next section will thus elaborate on this rather unusual type of war memorials placed at the intersection of memorialisation and commemoration.

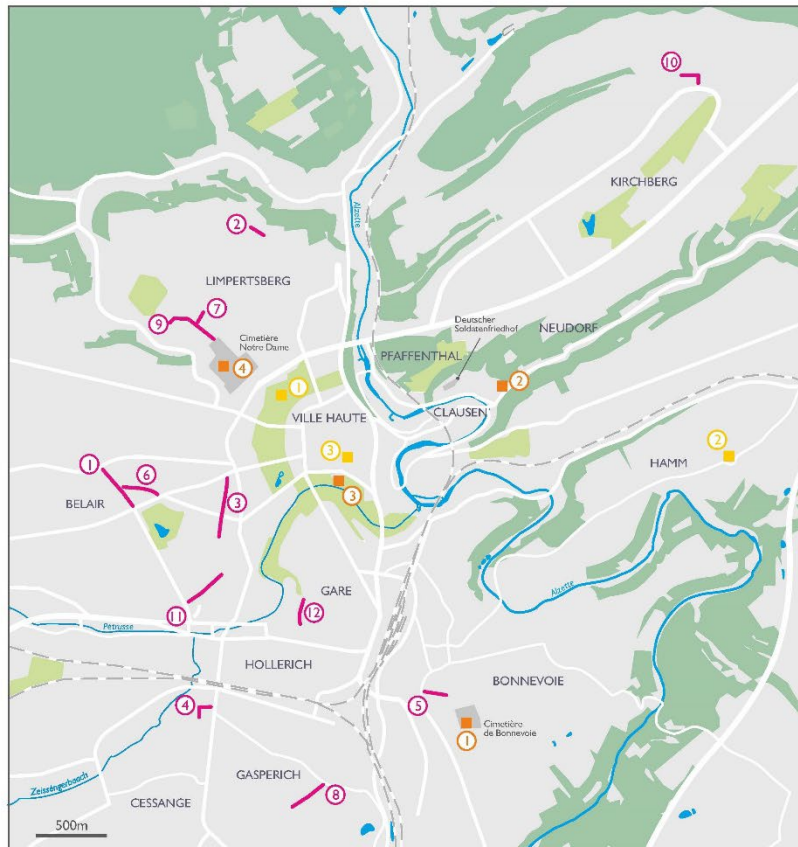
⁴⁰⁷ Login, E. L. (2014) p. 385.



WWI memorials in Luxembourg

- Plaques**
 - Plaque for American soldiers, Walferdange
 - Plaque for François Faber, Luxembourg City
 - Plaque for French aviator Alfred Furgerot, Differdange
 - Plaque for Légionnaires of Esch-sur-Alzette
 - Plaque for Légionnaires of Tétange
 - Plaque for Légionnaires of Hamm, Luxembourg City
 - Plaque for Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française, Luxembourg City
- Monuments**
 - Monument aux Morts des deux guerres - Bonnevoie, Luxembourg City
 - Monument aux Morts - Born
 - Monument aux Morts - Fischbach
 - Monument aux Morts - Bascharage
 - Monument aux Morts - Manternach
 - Monument aux Morts - Mersdorf
 - Monument aux Morts - Redange-sur-Attert
 - Monument aux Morts - Remerschen
 - Monument aux Morts 1914-1918 - François Schweishal, Ettelbruck
 - Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf, Luxembourg City
 - Monument du Souvenir (Gélie Fra), Luxembourg City
 - Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre & Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu, Luxembourg City
- Street names**
 - Boulevard de Verdun, Luxembourg City
 - Boulevard John J. Pershing, Luxembourg City
 - Rue Albert Ier, Luxembourg City
 - Rue d'Éthe, Luxembourg City
 - Rue des Légionnaires, Luxembourg City
 - Rue des Légionnaires, Tétange
 - Rue du Maréchal Foch, Luxembourg City
 - Rue François Faber, Luxembourg City
 - Rue Georges Clemenceau, Luxembourg City
 - Rue Joseph Hansen, Luxembourg City
 - Rue Marcel Noppeney, Luxembourg City
 - Rue Raymond Poincaré, Luxembourg City
 - Rue Wilson, Luxembourg City

Map 1 Location map of Luxembourg showing all identified WWI memorials



- WWI Plaques**
 - 1 Plaque for François Faber
 - 2 Plaque for Légionnaires of Hamm
 - 3 Plaque for Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française
- WWI Monuments**
 - 1 Monument aux Morts des deux guerres - Bonnevoie
 - 2 Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf
 - 3 Monument du Souvenir (Gélie Fra)
 - 4 Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre & Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu
- WWI Street names**
 - 1 Boulevard de Verdun
 - 2 Boulevard John J. Pershing
 - 3 Rue Albert Ier
 - 4 Rue d'Éthe
 - 5 Rue des Légionnaires
 - 6 Rue du Maréchal Foch
 - 7 Rue François Faber
 - 8 Rue Georges Clemenceau
 - 9 Rue Joseph Hansen
 - 10 Rue Marcel Noppeney
 - 11 Rue Raymond Poincaré
 - 12 Rue Wilson

Map 2 Location map of Luxembourg City showing all identified WWI memorials

5.4 Commemorative street names

Street names may seem as an unassuming and unnoticeable choice of memorialisation as they appear mundane and form part of the urban landscape and everyday life, but this vehicle of commemoration has existed for over two centuries and is practiced all over the world. In the context of war remembrance, almost every combatant nation including the UK, Germany, Canada, or New Zealand, decided to name streets, boulevards and squares after battles, generals, or soldiers.⁴⁰⁸ While their initial connection and meaning might often have been forgotten over the course of time, Ross Wilson notes that many of these commemorative street names continue to bear testimony to the way in which individuals or societies sought to remember a war.⁴⁰⁹

Commemorative street names hold a dual function: a primary practical function as geographical orientation markers, and a secondary symbolic function commemorating historical events or influential people.⁴¹⁰ Consequently, it can be argued that, like other types of memorials, street names can add to and reinforce a certain historical narrative through their integration into daily life. Their spatial organisation and intersection with other street names, or even memorial spaces, can further amplify the commemorative landscape of a city.⁴¹¹

The following sections will first discuss the concept and purpose of commemorative street names, who and what is being commemorated or left out, their spatial organisation and role in daily life, and the impact they can have on the historical narrative. While also drawing on examples from different countries, these aspects will primarily be evaluated by assessing the handful of commemorative street names linked to WWI in Luxembourg. The examples presented here will be able to support Maoz Azaryahu's argument that commemorative street names can be interpreted as means for the celebration and reification of a certain authorised version of the past.⁴¹² What becomes noticeable when looking at the origin and purpose of these street names in the

⁴⁰⁸ Wilson, R. (2016) Street names: the local, national and international memory of the First World War. *World War One Centenary: Continuations and Beginnings* (University of Oxford / JISC).

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ Azaryahu, M. (1996), p. 312.

⁴¹¹ See Azaryahu, M. (1996).

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, p. 312.

context of war memorialisation and commemoration, and how they can reinforce certain historical narratives, or versions thereof, is a clear overlapping with more traditional war memorials. In other words, what applies to commemorative street names within their urban setting can equally apply to other types of war memorials.

5.4.1 Origin, purpose, and impact

The practice of commemorative street names, and other forms of thoroughfares, has its origins in Paris starting with the French Revolution. Up until that point, street names only served a practical function as geographical and urban indicators, such as High Street or Market Square. With the introduction of the commemorative element, many street names acquired a secondary symbolic function, in this case becoming a component of French political symbolism. This practice slowly spread to other cities and was strongly associated with nation-building. There is thus a clear connection between street names, politics, and demonstrative ideological statements.⁴¹³ Azaryahu posits that the use of street names as a form of commemoration and memorialisation is instrumental in transforming the cityscape into a virtual political stage. Additionally, he describes the administrative act of naming streets as an appropriation of the public domain by official agencies with their own political agendas.⁴¹⁴

Hence, depending on the country's historical trajectory these street names could also be subject to change over the course of time. Azaryahu draws attention to Berlin, which over a short period of time witnessed momentous political and ideological transformations and transitions; from German Empire to Weimar Republic, followed by the Third Reich, up to the division of the city into East Berlin and West Berlin, and finally its reunification in 1990. This constant change of the political and ideological climate within Berlin, and Germany more broadly, naturally had an impact on the naming and renaming of various streets.⁴¹⁵ Likewise, Christoph Purschke states that each street name "represents an ideological order that legitimi[s]es certain aspects of the sociocultural (self-)

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 313-314.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 319.

image of a community by inscribing it in the cityscape.”⁴¹⁶ In the event of a political shift, the names of certain figures and actors that have been remembered in the urban landscape are then replaced with those that reflect the new political ideology and principles.⁴¹⁷

In this regard, Azaryahu also states that commemorative street names, in their secondary symbolic function, serve as tools to laud and reify a particular, authorised and often one-dimensional rendition of history.⁴¹⁸ One-dimensional in the sense that the focus remains on the heroes or the ‘good’ side of history, which is then echoed in the physical street signs. These symbolically charged commemorative street names can thus be interpreted as unequivocal political statements.⁴¹⁹ This is also true for commemorative street names associated with WWI, which the examples below will demonstrate.

5.4.2 WWI commemorative street names

By late 1914, the city of Montreal in Canada was one of the first to plan the renaming of streets and avenues after heroic figures and places linked to the conflict, thereby reflecting the entente between France and the British Empire. Wilson points out that at the same time they served “as a patriotic appeal to the metropolis whose linguistic and cultural divisions had historically been a source of tension.”⁴²⁰ On the other side, in many of the Allied countries, street names with a connection to Germany or important German figures were renamed as people expressed dissatisfaction about living on Germanic streets while the war was still raging on. Many of these ‘teutonic’ street names were thus written out of the urban landscape in the UK and France.⁴²¹

After 1918, the names of the battles, generals and soldiers of the war began to be commemorated all around the world, with more than one street, avenue, or square bearing the names Marne, Ypres, Gallipoli, Foch, Pershing, or Haig. An analysis of trends in memorialisation based on information held by the UK

⁴¹⁶ Purschke, C. (2021) Cultural representation in Luxembourgish street naming practices. *Linguistics Vanguard*, 7 (5), p. 3.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴¹⁸ Azaryahu, M. (1996), p. 319; p. 326.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 325-326.

⁴²⁰ Wilson, R. (2016).

⁴²¹ Wilson, R. (2016).

National Inventory of War Memorials from the early 2000s lists a total of 24 street names in honour of casualties in the UK, though it can be assumed that this number is not definitive, with many more unaccounted streets named after battles and generals.⁴²²

Interestingly, in the German city Regensburg, there are not only streets named after Franz-Joseph of Austria and Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, but also after battles such as Verdun, Arras, and the Somme, all within the same district, thereby creating a sort of commemorative precinct or memorial landscape through those street names.⁴²³ Several German cities and towns also have streets named after the so-called ‘Langemarck Myth’. While in some cases, the *Langemarckstraße* was renamed over the course of time, others remain to this day, with even a bus stop bearing this name in Münster. However, as argued by Mark Connelly and Stefan Goebel in their article “*The Langemarck Myth between Cultural Oblivion and Critical Memory in (West) Germany, 1945-2014*”, it is unlikely that this street named during the 1930s and once charged with meaning, will nowadays stir memories, trigger associations, or spark curiosity among the general public.⁴²⁴

Although not completely disappearing, this trend of naming streets connected to WWI started to dwindle by the end of the 1920s in many countries as the views towards the war also began to shift. When faced with the realities of the post-war world, the war was regarded less as victorious but as tragic instead.⁴²⁵ This also affirms that the attitudes of the public towards a particular conflict naturally impacts its memorialisation, as supported by Furlong, Knight and Slocombe.⁴²⁶ Simultaneously, it attests the assumption that street names are connected to the political and ideological climate of a given time.

⁴²² Furlong, J. et al. (2002), p. 11.

⁴²³ Wilson, R. (2016).

⁴²⁴ Connelly, M. L., and Goebel, S. P. (2022), p. 1.

⁴²⁵ Wilson, R. (2016).

⁴²⁶ Furlong, J. et al. (2002), p. 28.

5.4.3 WWI commemorative street names in Luxembourg

Luxembourg is no stranger to naming streets after influential national but also international historical figures, such as former sovereigns, as well as significant dates such as the *Avenue du Dix Septembre* (10th September), commemorating the liberation of Luxembourg City by US troops in 1944 after four years of Nazi occupation.⁴²⁷ Like in other cities around the world, many commemorative street names in Luxembourg have a strong connection to nation-building and affirmation thereof. Important national dates like the 10th September 1944 are therefore naturally worthy of remembrance. Throughout the grand duchy, street names linked to WWII figures or events are thus very common due to the importance this conflict holds within Luxembourg's history and collective memory. But how does this compare to streets connected to WWI figures and events, and how do these support Azaryahu's arguments mentioned above?

A small number of streets associated with WWI could be identified from existing sources mentioning street names seen as a form of commemoration and my additional research into this matter. Nevertheless, the exact number cannot be confirmed at this stage, as it was not feasible to investigate every street name within the country given the available resources and time, requiring a separate research project for such an endeavour. During my research, street names connected to WWII were not investigated further; however, there is little doubt that WWII street names overtake WWI street names in number and also in importance.

A total of eight street names, seven of which are located within Luxembourg City, and the last one in Tétange, can be considered without a doubt as WWI commemorative street names. Two are named after the Luxembourgish *légionnaires*, while the others are named after international figures who played important roles during the war: US General Pershing, US President Wilson, King Albert I of Belgium, French Maréchal Foch, French President Raymond Poincaré, and French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, known as '*Père la Victoire*' (Father Victory).

⁴²⁷ The north of the country was however still occupied and became engulfed by the Battle of the Bulge.

Five additional street names that could be classified as possible WWI commemorative streets are *Rue François Faber*, *Rue Joseph Hansen*, *Rue Marcel Noppeney*, *Boulevard de Verdun*, and *Rue d'Etche*. However, in the case of *Rue François Faber*, who was a well-known racing cyclist of Luxembourgish descent, the additional inscription on the street sign only refers to him as the winner of the *Tour de France*, with no mention of him being a *légionnaire* who died at the Western Front (see 9.2 for details). The same is true for *Rue Marcel Noppeney*, named after a prominent Luxembourgish author and known Francophile, who aided French and Belgian war victims and provided false papers to escaped prisoners of war hiding in Luxembourg. Considered a spy for France, Noppeney was imprisoned by the German forces and sentenced to death; however, following an intervention by Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and he was eventually released after the end of the war.⁴²⁸ Despite his active role during WWI, the street sign does not acknowledge any of this, its inscription only referring to his career as an author.⁴²⁹ For *Rue Joseph Hansen*, the same can be observed. As noted elsewhere, Hansen was part of a spy network and thus played an important part during WWI; a fact not mentioned on the street sign.⁴³⁰ Naturally, these street signs have only limited capacity for additional text. Yet, it can be argued that by recognising Faber's, Noppeney's and Hansen's participation in WWI through their respective street signs, it would add to the overall memorialisation and commemoration of WWI by possibly making residents and by-passers more aware of this '*petite guerre*' and these historical figures. For their potential of being WWI commemorative street names, they are listed in the inventory and feature on the location map of Luxembourg City. In this regard, a street name for spy Lise Rischart (Chapter 4) could not be found during this research.

In the case of *Boulevard de Verdun*, even though it is not specified if the street was named after the town or the battle and without details about its designation, the name immediately evokes a connection to the Battle of Verdun. An article in the journal *Ons Stad*, which dedicates a section in each issue to the meaning of the street names within the capital, notes that the street

⁴²⁸ See details on Marcel Noppeney: C²DH (2018).

⁴²⁹ LU 64.2.2:806.

⁴³⁰ LU 64.2.2:558.

commemorates the fortress of Verdun where one of the longest battles of WWI occurred.⁴³¹ Also in the case of *Rue d'Ette*, it is not absolutely certain whether this street was solely named after Ette, a district of the Belgian town Virton, or to commemorate the massacre of 218 civilians by the Imperial German Army that took place there on 22nd August 1914. However, considering that this street was renamed in 1925 replacing its former name *Rue Cerf*, the latter explanation is very likely.⁴³²

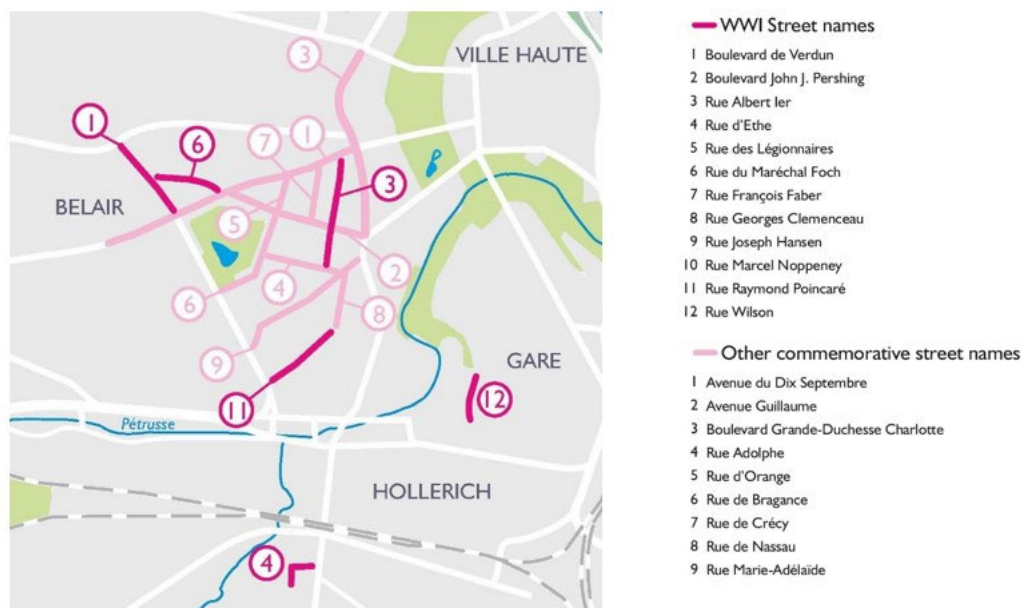
Looking at the WWI associated street names in Luxembourg, a distinct connection and common theme becomes apparent, which underwrites Azaryahu's assertion that commemorative street names have the power to exhibit and strengthen a certain interpretation of the past, namely that of the heroes and victors. Same as with the handful of WWI memorials, they act as additional pillars of the commonly accepted and widespread narrative of Luxembourg being one of the Allies despite its rather ambiguous neutrality and considered enemy territory by the Allies during the course of the war. Both Scuto and Majerus also accentuate this policy of naming streets in connection to WWI as a means to integrate Luxembourg among the winning side. Scuto further points out that it is not surprising that Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, despite being the husband of Princess Antonia of Luxembourg, does not have a street named after him.⁴³³ A lot of importance was thus given to who was being remembered through a street sign and who was purposefully left out.

The locations and spatial organisation of some of these streets, and by extension other memorial spaces, is also noteworthy. Both streets named after the *légionnaires*, one in Bonnevoie (Luxembourg City) and one in Tétange, demonstrate a geographical and symbolic junction with other memorial features. In both cases, the street is close to a WWI memorial commemorating the *légionnaires* of that respective community (see details in Chapter 8 and Chapter 9). Accordingly, this spatial connection creates a strong link between these two separate memorial features and reinforces the other at the same time.

⁴³¹ Beck, F. (2010) Was bedeuten unsere Straßennamen. *Ons Stad*, n° 93, p. 69.

⁴³² LU 64.2.2:445; see also "Remembering the Great War" (in "Aftermath"): C²DH (2018).

⁴³³ Scuto, D. (2018a), p. 6; Majerus, B. (2007), p. 291.



Map 3 Detail of Belair/Hollerich showing cluster of commemorative street names

Meanwhile, *Rue du Maréchal Foch* and *Rue Albert Ier* (Albert I, King of the Belgians), both playing leading roles during WWI, are not in the vicinity of another WWI memorial but are located within a one-kilometre radius of each other creating another significant spatial link (see Map 3). This resembles the group of WWI street names in Regensburg as aforementioned. Additionally, *Rue du Maréchal Foch*, which includes the additional inscription “*Vainqueur de la Grande-Guerre*” (Winner of the Great War), links *Avenue du Dix Septembre* with *Boulevard de Verdun*, both of which also meeting at an intersection (see Map 3). While these street names refer to two separate events from two separate conflicts, it still creates, even if unintentionally, a powerful and mythical relationship between the Allies and their shared victory over Germany in both conflicts. Adjacent to *Avenue du Dix Septembre* is also *Rue de Crécy* which creates a further meaningful association to John the Blind who died at the Battle of Crécy in 1346 fighting for France and considered a national hero in Luxembourg. This feeds into Azaryahu’s statement that the proximity and intersections of streets do not always necessarily imply any relationships but may still suggest imaginary encounters.⁴³⁴

Such a symbolic link and thematic focus can for example already be observed with the aforementioned *Klëppelkrich Monument* installed in 1972 just outside the

⁴³⁴ Azaryahu, M. (1996), p. 327.

Cimetière Notre-Dame in Limpertsberg, connected with the *Hinzerter Kräiz* and the *Monument du Maquis* via the *Allée des Résistants et des Déportés*. A further connection is even made with the *Allée de l'Unioun* - named after *D'Unioun* to refer to the name given to the confederative union of the various Luxembourg resistance movements - running perpendicular to *Allée des Résistants et des Déportés*. Although from two different conflicts, this idea of shared resistance during the *Klëppelkrich* and WWII becomes palpable through their sheer spatial organisation and connection, which in this case was actually not created by chance but on purpose as *D'Unioun* had requested to have these streets close to the *Hinzerter Kräiz* named after the WWII resistance movements and fighters.⁴³⁵

Hence, street names have the ability to intertwine historical events from different time periods with a shared symbolism, to create these so-called imaginary encounters of historical people or even a thematic district.⁴³⁶

Assessing the spatial organisation of some of the other above-mentioned streets, a clear connection between different historical figures and events of Luxembourg's past also becomes evident (see Map 3). An example of such imaginary encounters of historical figures is *Rue Albert 1er*, which is near *Rue Adolphe* and *Avenue Guillaume*, two former grand dukes of Luxembourg. Just around the corner is *Rue Marie-Adélaïde*, who held the title of Grand Duchess of Luxembourg during WWI, adjacent to *Rue de Nassau*, the royal house from which the sovereigns of Luxembourg descend. The two streets to the left and right of *Avenue Guillaume* are *Rue d'Orange* and *Rue de Bragance*, another two royal houses with a link to Luxembourg's sovereigns. All these streets are close to *Boulevard Grande-Duchesse Charlotte*, who succeeded her elder sister Marie-Adélaïde, thus presenting a cluster of Luxembourgish, Dutch, and Belgian royal houses, within a perimeter of less than a kilometre. Interestingly, while the often considered too pro-German Marie-Adélaïde has a street named after her, her younger sister and successor Charlotte, viewed as one of the heroes of WWII, has the honour of not only having her title but lending her name to a boulevard rather than a mere street. A case could be made for *Rue Marie-Adélaïde* to be

⁴³⁵ Dondelinger, P. (2008), p. 33.

⁴³⁶ Purschke, C. (2021), p. 5.

considered a WWI commemorative street name, especially when trying to break away from the post-war narrative theme.

Considering the dates, all street nominations in the capital apart from *Boulevard John J. Pershing* (1952), *Rue François Faber* (1956), *Rue Joseph Hansen* (1956) and *Rue Marcel Noppeney* (1978) were authorised by the communal council during the interwar period. This corresponds with the same trend seen in other combatant nations and the need for memorialisation at the time. The earliest (re) naming of a street was however in Tétange, with *Rue des Ponts* being retitled into *Rue des Légionnaires* in 1919.⁴³⁷ Background information on the renaming of this street can be found in the booklet “1916-1991: OGB-L, Sektion Tetingen”. The local group of the *Comité du Souvenir* (for the erection of the *Monument du Souvenir* in Luxembourg City) submitted a request to the local council to rename the *Rue des Ponts* into *Rue des Légionnaires* in October 1919 for two reasons. Firstly, it was their intention to create a lasting memory of all the *légionnaires* who fought during the war for the current and future residents of Tétange.⁴³⁸ This showcases the ability of street names to act and function as memorials. The second reason for this renaming and for choosing the *Rue des Ponts* rather than any other street in Tétange results from the fact that five of the eight *légionnaires* originating from Tétange resided at point or another during their lives in this same street.⁴³⁹ The renaming of the street is thus very apt, also considering the proximity of a memorial plaque for these *légionnaires* a few meters away from this street (see Chapter 9).

An article from November 1921 in *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise* already implied the naming or even renaming of streets in the capital to express the gratitude Luxembourg has towards its liberators, meaning the Allies, Maréchal Foch, or Albert I, with not even the *légionnaires* being commemorated yet this way. In reference to an upcoming city council meeting for the designation of streets and other public places, some of which were still unnamed, the author of the newspaper article points out there were already numerous squares or streets named after Woodrow Wilson or Georges Clemenceau in other countries.

⁴³⁷ Kauffmann, J., Bockler, F. and Onofhängege Gewerkschaftsbond Lëtzebuerg Section Tétange (1991) *1916-1991: OGB-L, Sektion Tetingen*. Tetingen: OGB-L, p. 85.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

However, even though these important men should be honoured by such a designation, elsewhere their names more often than not regrettably replaced the old appellations of alleys of yesteryear, whose names represented the still living memory of those of the past, as noted in the article. Instead, it was proposed that the new unnamed or poorly named boulevards and avenues of recent years, or even duplicated street names as was also the case in Luxembourg City, would be better suited for this purpose.⁴⁴⁰ Another article in the same newspaper from June 1922, mentions a petition by the residents of *Rue Joseph II*⁴⁴¹ requesting to firstly elevate the street to a boulevard, and secondly to rename it after Maréchal Foch, again in an effort to recognise the merits of the liberators of Luxembourg. The reason behind this choice was also because during his stays in Luxembourg after the end of the war, Maréchal Foch resided at number 10 of that very same street - a building that even still today bears the name *Villa Foch*.⁴⁴²

Looking at the records held at archives of Luxembourg City, it appears that in some cases it was indeed new streets that were named after events or figures related to WWI during the interwar period, since the records provide information if a street had a former appellation. This was for example the case for *Rue Wilson*, previously *Rue Feller*, or *Rue des Légionnaires* in Bonnevoie, previously *Rue Pauline*.⁴⁴³ In the case of *Rue du Maréchal Foch*, it did not replace *Rue Joseph II* - which got eventually upgraded to a boulevard - but a different location was found. It can be suggested that *Rue du Maréchal Foch* was a new street as no indication of a former name is given in its corresponding file at archives, and the area where the street is located counting among the neighbourhoods that were expanding around that time.

Nevertheless, the invasion by Nazi Germany in 1940 and the ensuing change of the political and ideological climate imposed onto Luxembourg resulted in the relabelling of streets. The Nazis only accepted German as the native language of Luxembourg and not any other foreign 'gibberish'. Consequently, all road signs, signposts, names of rivers, bridges, squares and streets, commonly written in

⁴⁴⁰ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 51. Jg., n° 329 (25.11.1921), p. 1.

⁴⁴¹ Named after Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II of the House Habsburg-Lorraine.

⁴⁴² *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 52. Jg., n° 167 (16.06.1922), p. 1

⁴⁴³ LU 64.2.2:374; LU 64.2.2:671.

French, could only be in German. While some older and historic street names, or those with more generic, natural, associative or directional names, were not changed but only translated into German, other designations that did not conform with the Nazi worldview required renaming.⁴⁴⁴ It is therefore not surprising that streets alluding to the Allies were amended: *Rue des Légionnaires* in Bonnevoie was renamed into *Limburgerstrasse*, *Rue du Maréchal Foch* bore the name of *Blücherallee*, and *Boulevard de Verdun* was simply renamed into *Verduner Ring* during the occupation years.⁴⁴⁵ This again reinforces Azaryahu's claim that commemorative streets hold a strong symbolic function as political statements and have the power to propagate a certain version of the past, while simultaneously diminishing another version.

According to Ross Wilson, much of a country's history can be read through the names given to public places.⁴⁴⁶ Likewise, Azaryahu points out the similarities of an index of street names of a city map to the index of a history textbook which the case of the WWI commemorative street names in Luxembourg also confirms. However, this assemblage of memorialisation does not provide the reader with the full historical story or narration thereof, but only with an authorised index of such a story.⁴⁴⁷ In other words, the historical figures and events that are being remembered through the physical and visible street signs represent and reinforce the accepted historical narrative aligning with the respective attitude towards a conflict and regime in power, rendering it susceptible to change. Through the unassuming presence of street names, history, or a certain version thereof, becomes interwoven with daily life, and an inseparable element of reality. Street names can thus render the past they embody tangible and familiar, as posited by Azaryahu.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁴ May, G (2002) Die Straßenbezeichnungen der Stadt Luxemburg unter deutscher Besatzung (1940-1944). *Ons Stad*, n° 71, pp. 30-32; see also the case study in Purschke, C. (2021), pp. 6-8.

⁴⁴⁵ LU 64.2.2:671; LU 64.2.2:472; LU 64.2.2:337.

⁴⁴⁶ Wilson, R. (2016).

⁴⁴⁷ Azaryahu, M. (1996), pp. 327-328.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter elaborated on war memorialisation with a specific focus on Luxembourg, including both the history and historiography. As argued by Marc Schoentgen, war memorials were very rare before 1945; nevertheless, there were a few noteworthy earlier monuments which can be considered war memorials pre-dating 1914. While it is also true that there are relatively few WWI memorials, especially when compared to WWII, this chapter has already introduced some of the meaningful WWI memorials that have not, however, received much attention, but whose biographies will be constructed and analysed in the subsequent chapters.

With the majority of sources fixating on the *Gëlle Fra* due to its high symbolism and importance as a national monument, the study of war memorialisation within academia, and in particular encompassing WWI memorials, is still very much in its infancy in Luxembourg. Detailed studies of war memorials for any conflict are still relatively rare, and the few that do exist are mostly restricted to WWII or the *Gëlle Fra*. The WWI memorials in Luxembourg often feature as by-products of wider themes, with a dominant focus on the *légionnaires* or the Franco-Luxembourgish relationship, which played a crucial role in Luxembourg's war memorialisation politics during the interbellum. This has, however, as consequence that smaller memorials are given little to no attention, often not elaborating on any changes or relocations. The findings section has also demonstrated that there are more WWI memorials than usually listed in most secondary sources, evident of a lack of thorough research into Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI.

What is also missing in the majority of cases, are contemporary comments on these war memorials which during my research were gathered through a phenomenological survey, thereby adding the most recent chapter to their life-stories. This in turn enables further analysis, discussion, and meaningful conclusions on how Luxembourg memorialised WWI and the memorial's evolution over the past century and their place, importance and meaning today.

Moreover, commemorative street names have been interpreted as tools to celebrate and reify a certain authorised version of the past. The examples and analysis of commemorative street names associated to WWI in Luxembourg already introduce similar themes and connections that will also be exemplified and supported through the case studies of the selected monuments and memorial plaques in the following chapters. Few in numbers and overshadowed by WWII in both quantity and importance, these WWI street names' primary commemorative element is connected to Luxembourg being one of the Allies and victors, underlining their relationship with France, and to a lesser extent with Belgium, linked to important figures of that period, and those viewed as heroes, martyrs, or victims.

Chapter 6 Monument du Souvenir - Gëlle Fra

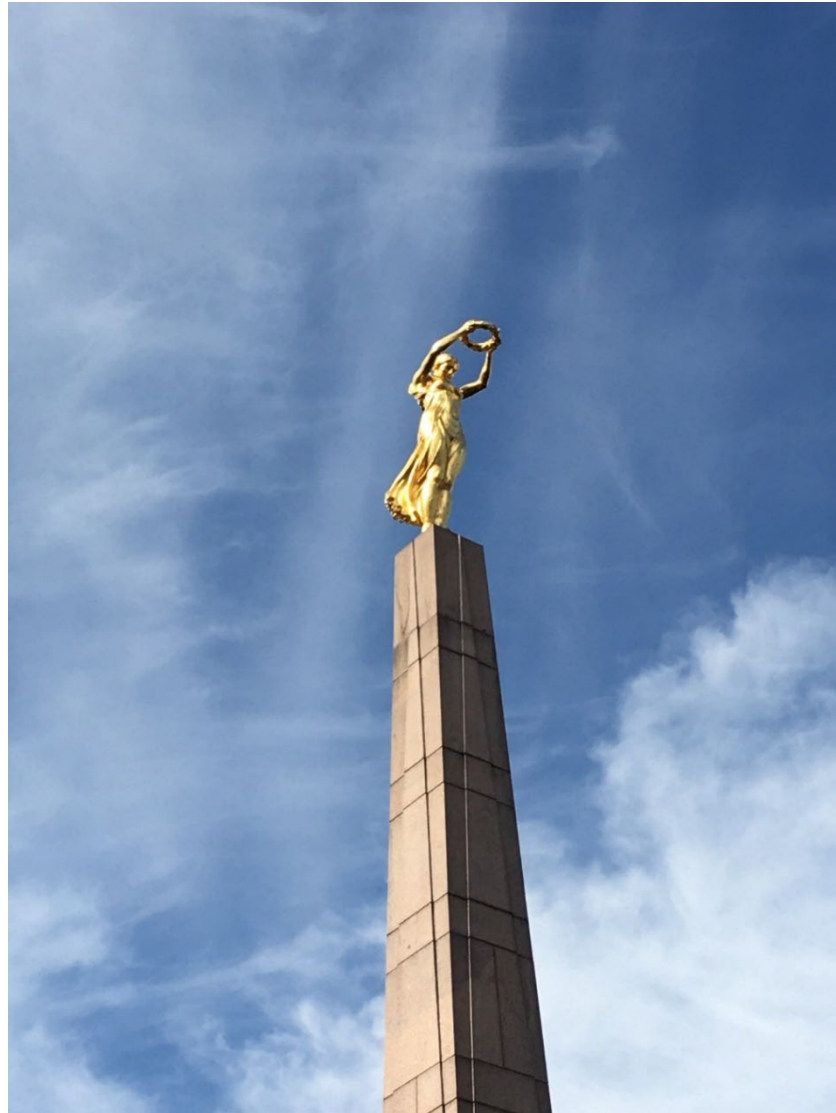


Figure 6-1 Monument du Souvenir - Gëlle Fra, July 2022
© Laura Zenner

6.1 Introduction

Considered a *lieu de mémoire* of Luxembourg, the *Monument du Souvenir* on the *Place de la Constitution* in Luxembourg City (see Appendix 2), better known under its moniker *Gëlle Fra* (Figure 6-1) is a landmark and symbol of Luxembourg's identity, independence, and history. The monument is officially classified as national cultural heritage, benefitting from national protection since 2002.⁴⁴⁹ Featuring on various types of souvenirs, the *Gëlle Fra* has become a popular tourist attraction, quite a unique accomplishment for a war memorial.

⁴⁴⁹ See full list as of January 2024: INPA (2024) *Immeubles et Objets bénéficiant d'une Protection Nationale*.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the *Gëlle Fra* celebrated her 100th anniversary on 27th May 2023 with exclusive coverage in the media and a celebratory event. Nowadays, the *Gëlle Fra* appears to be a constant presence in the everyday life of Luxembourg making it hard to imagine that the *Gëlle Fra* was once the subject of critique, and even missing from the city's skyline for decades.

This chapter will analyse this famous Luxembourgish landmark while constructing its long, dynamic, and turbulent biography. This will encompass its initial idea, construction, and inauguration in the interbellum, its destruction by the Nazis, the subsequent disappearance of the *Gëlle Fra* statue until the early 1980s, its second inauguration in 1985 and its current state. The chapter will review different critiques and controversies, and also examine how this war memorial and surroundings changed over time aided by photographs and the results of the phenomenological surveys. Through this, it will be assessed how a war memorial initially dedicated to WWI morphed into a truly national monument and symbol of Luxembourg's identity and independence.

6.2 Concept and location

To memorialise and commemorate the sacrifice and courage of the Luxembourgers who fought alongside the Allies, the idea for this memorial was born in the early years of the interwar period. Rather than it being an initiative that originated from the state or public authorities, it was the population that sought to remember these volunteers through the form of a fitting monument.⁴⁵⁰

What needs to be noted at this point is that, even though this war memorial is meant to commemorate Luxembourgers within the Entente forces, the focus remains on the *légionnaires* and to a lesser extent on those in the Belgian forces. As mentioned elsewhere, Luxembourgish expatriates also volunteered in other armies of the Entente, despite being fewer in number, namely in the British, the US, Canadian or Italian armies. This fact is hardly ever acknowledged in the literature of the *Monument du Souvenir* consulted during this research, with the term *légionnaire* often adopted as an umbrella term for all those volunteers in relation to the memorial. Needless to say, those few

⁴⁵⁰ Beck, H. (1999) Le Monument du Souvenir érigé sur l'emplacement d'un vieux bastion. *Ons Stad*, n° 60, p. 2.

Luxembourgers in the Imperial German Army are also neither included on this memorial nor mentioned in its corresponding literature. Another important point to note is that the memorial was designed to only commemorate Luxembourgish combatants rather than all Luxembourgish victims of WWI, which would include the victims of the air raids, for whom there are two separate local war memorials in Clausen and Bonnevoie (see Chapter 8). Consequently, there exists no communal war memorial in Luxembourg remembering and uniting all victims of WWI, be this all those who fought in the war, irrespective of which side, or all civilian victims.

Some sources name Nicolas Jung, a railwayman from Bonnevoie, as the ‘father’ of the *Monument du Souvenir*. Through letters, notes and other documents kept by his son, Jung is said to have come up with this idea in the few weeks following the Armistice. He would also later become a member of the *Comité du Souvenir*.⁴⁵¹ Created in 1918 and consisting of mainly Francophile, socialist, and liberal bourgeois, among them also journalist Batty Weber, this committee, with its local subdivisions throughout the country, set out to realise this monument and to collect the necessary funds through public collections, sports, or charity events.⁴⁵²

One of the first points of discussion on the agenda by the committee was the location for this new memorial. Various locations throughout the country were proposed, for instance at Grevenmacher on the Luxembourgish-German border, which would stand as a symbol against the invasion and occupation. Or going in the opposite direction, at Zolwerknapp, thereby close to France. Even Verdun was suggested. Ultimately, it was decided that the memorial should be situated in the capital, its location being more central and thereby also more accessible.⁴⁵³ Batty Weber also commented on the ideal location for this memorial in his feuilleton “*Abreißkalender*”. For him, the memorial would either be best placed in a rural and scenic location (he named the Scheuerberg in Remich near the German border), or in the capital.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵¹ May, G. (1986), pp. 5-6; Weber, B. (1922c) *Abreißkalender*. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (22.07.1922).

⁴⁵² Majerus, B. (2007), p. 291; Camarda, S. (2020), p. 184.

⁴⁵³ Beck, H. (1999), pp. 2-3; Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010) *Exposition d'Gëlle Fra: 11.12.10-23.01.11 Käerjeng*. Luxembourg: Agence luxembourgeoise d'action culturelle., p. 41.

⁴⁵⁴ Weber, B. (1919) *Abreißkalender*. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (03.04.1919).

While different options within the city were proposed, it was decided by a majority vote on 20th January 1920 that the *Place de la Constitution* on the former bastion Beck of the old fortress would represent the ideal location. This square lies near the intersection of two boulevards and the two adjacent bridges connecting the two major parts of Luxembourg City. Situated diagonally across the cathedral, the *Place de la Constitution* is an open space, visible from all sides, and through its balcony effect offers panoramic views over the picturesque *Pétrusse* valley (see Appendix 2). The memorial would benefit from the terrain of the old bastion without the view being obstructed by too many adjoining houses, as noted by Henri Beck.⁴⁵⁵

This was the location also favoured by Batty Weber because it would be “closest to the sun and the heart of the city, and at the same time free, offering the greetings of the city and the country to everyone arriving from the train station [...]”⁴⁵⁶ To add to Weber’s comment, the square is also at the heart of many significant cultural and social events, even more so in recent years, making this war memorial an integrated part of the city and the Luxembourgish people. As will be discussed in section 6.10, this however entails certain consequences and changes to this square and by extension the war memorial.

6.3 Design and symbolism

The next point of action was to decide what form and style the memorial should take and by whom it should be designed. Here opinions were also diverse and divided with one correspondent of the national daily newspaper *Luxemburger Wort* calling for a national monument in the form of a war memorial church including a hero monument.⁴⁵⁷ This idea was promptly opposed by Weber, proposing instead that the memorial, which is supposed to be a national monument, should be situated in an open public space so that everyone walking past is reminded of its meaning rather than inside a church which so many Luxembourgers might not enter. Weber commented that not every *légionnaire* was religious and that those would not appreciate the idea of being immortalised

⁴⁵⁵ Beck, H. (1999), pp. 2-3.

⁴⁵⁶ Weber, B. (1919).

[Own translation]

⁴⁵⁷ As cited in Clesse, R. (1999) "Wir wollen heut' der Helden Denken ...": die Geschichte eines Monuments im Spiegel der Presse. *Ons Stad*, n° 60, p. 19.

upon their death in a church, which they had avoided during their lifetime.⁴⁵⁸ Weber accordingly called for “a national monument in its true meaning of the word as understood as such by the general public.”⁴⁵⁹ Weber’s disagreement on erecting a church as a memorial and his comments are noteworthy, considering that Luxembourg is a predominantly Catholic country, and even more so a hundred years ago. For this reason, Weber showed a more secular and liberal approach to how war and its victims should be memorialised.

Having put together a certain set of guidelines and rules regarding the memorial’s aesthetic, technical and narrative elements, a public competition was organised in 1920. The design should remain as simple as possible and underline its peaceful character but still demonstrate the deep appreciation for the patriotic attitude the volunteers had shown during the war. The design should avoid any disparaging references to other foreign nations or militarist aspects but show the real repercussions the war had for Luxembourg. Out of eighteen entries, Luxembourgish artist Claus Cito with his design titled “*À nos braves*” (To Our Braves) was selected as the winner by an international jury for the sober elegance of its execution, uncomplicated symbolism and being able to harmonise within its chosen location.⁴⁶⁰

After implementing small technical adjustments, Cito’s final design envisioned a 21-meter-high obelisk resting on a rectangular plinth, both made from granite of the Vosges region, constructed by stonemasonry company Jacquemart. The memorial was to stand in the middle of a circular pool of water (almost like a fountain) surrounded by a low railing created by Jean Curot and executed by locksmith Michel Haagen. Three larger than life statues, designed and crafted by Cito and cast by *La Compagnie des Bronzes* in Bruxelles, were to adorn the obelisk. Two oxidised bronze figures - a warrior in a seated position holding a shield with his right hand while his left arm rests on a sarcophagus upon which lies his fallen comrade holding a sword and laurel wreath - are at the base of the monument. These warrior figures void of any identifiable uniforms or insignias

⁴⁵⁸ Weber, B. (1919).

⁴⁵⁹ Weber, B. (1919).

[Own translation]

⁴⁶⁰ Beck, H. (1999), pp. 3-4; May, G. (1985) Monument du Souvenir - Gëlle Fra: construction et inauguration. In: G. Gengler et al. (eds.) *Monument du souvenir: eis Gëlle Fra: 1923, 1940, 1984*. Commission gouvernementale pour la reconstruction du Monument du Souvenir, pp. 13-14.

represent both those who have fallen on the battlefields and those who have returned but are mourning their fellow compatriots. On top of the obelisk is a 3,30-meter gilded bronze statue of a barefoot woman, the *Gëlle Fra*, holding a laurel wreath over those two soldiers below (Figure 6-2), giving allusion to an angel of peace or the Goddess of Victory.⁴⁶¹

The use of a female figure symbolising victory is a common motif in memorialisation dating back to the classical era. The *Siegessäule* (Victory Column) in Berlin, or even the *Victoria Memorial* in front of Buckingham Palace in London, are well-known examples. They often bear a striking resemblance to their classical forerunners like the *Winged Victory of Samothrace*. Even though the *Gëlle Fra* is missing the characteristic wings, many visual similarities with the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* are evident, as described by Frédéric Humbel writing on the statue's design and impact. This includes the way the fabric of the dress was sculpted to not only envelop the front of her body, and thereby clearly exposing her belly button, but also to give the impression of the fabric moving in the wind at the back. In this way, the flowing dress gives liveliness and a certain dynamic to an otherwise immobile statue.⁴⁶² This type of design of an elegant female figure draped in garments that accentuate her body was also common during the era of the French Revolution, representative for forms of political constitution and iconography, characterised by an allegorised femininity that embodies freedom and the nation, as described by Nataša Ilić.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶¹ Beck, H. (1999), p. 4; Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010), pp. 43-49; p. 74.

⁴⁶² Humbel, F. (1999) Entre la terre et le Ciel. *Ons Stad*, n° 60, p. 30.

⁴⁶³ Ilić, N. (2001) Sanja Iveković's Lady Rosa of Luxembourg. *n.paradoxa*, Vol. 8, p. 22.



Figure 6-2 Monument du Souvenir pre-WWII
Source: Archives Nationales de Luxembourg

Cito's design did not escape some controversy and critique from an aesthetic and artistic point of view, especially in the conservative and clerical milieu, such as by the *Luxemburger Wort*.⁴⁶⁴ A newspaper article from May 1923 commented that even though they do not wish to offend the sculptor or the *Comité du Souvenir*, and are not against the actual idea of the monument, "it does not prevent the actual creation from showing unfortunate moments in the aesthetical and ethical sense."⁴⁶⁵ To convey the meaning for which the monument should stand in an impeccable artistic representation, it would have been best to remain more modest. The article spoke out against the need of having this plump, hulking, and coarse bronze statue, and that despite wearing a flowing dress, effectively appears as nude and portrays an aesthetic and artistic monstrosity.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁴ Clesse, R. (1999), pp. 19-20.

⁴⁶⁵ *Luxemburger Wort*, 76. Jg., n° 153/154 (02.06.1923), p. 3.
[Own translation]

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Referring to the two equally sparsely clothed male statues at the base, the article asked what person, upon looking at this scene, would think that this represents the “death-defying loyalty of the surviving and dead Luxembourgish *légionnaires*, who neither alive nor dead used to look like this”⁴⁶⁷ – meaning naked. The notion of timelessness, which the design is supposed to express, was thus being challenged and instead regarded as a motivation, and maybe even an excuse, for the lack of clothing of the statues. Rather than achieving this notion of timelessness, the design of the monument merely managed to achieve a lack of understanding from the observers as supported by the many jokes circulating at the time, according to *Luxemburger Wort*.⁴⁶⁸

The article went as far as to say that if it were not for the inscriptive messages by French Maréchal Foch and Belgian General Gillain, nothing of this memorial would allude to the *légionnaires* for whom it was erected.⁴⁶⁹ Despite the above-mentioned critique of the gilded statue in the national press, it is in fact, and maybe ironically so, this same statue that eventually gave this memorial its more commonly known and beloved name of *Gëlle Fra*.

6.4 Construction and funding

Construction began in spring 1922, but due to essential yet previously unplanned additional work to the substructure of the monument and despite simplifications by abandoning the idea of the pool of water in exchange for a parterre with flower beds surrounding the monument, the available funds were soon exhausted. The City of Luxembourg announced that they would take over half of the extra costs on the condition that the State would contribute the other half. The State rejected this proposal due to budgeting reasons. Private initiatives as well as the money collected through the selling of special stamps allowed for the additional costs to be covered.⁴⁷⁰

The idea of collecting funds via stamps had already existed in other countries, with the difference that the money collected through the surcharge usually went

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[Own translation]

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁰ Beck, H. (1999), p. 5; Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010), p. 49.

to the Red Cross or war victims, rather than for the construction of a war memorial. To help contribute to the construction, a special series of stamps, called “*Timbre du Souvenir*”, was already available from 1921 onwards, generally meant for collectors rather than usage. The series from 1921 was not sufficient as a second series of stamps was launched in 1923 with even a double surcharge.⁴⁷¹

As indicated by René Link, this second series likely consisted of remnants of unsold stamps from the first series as the dentation and images are identical. The images on these stamps had no connection to the memorial or the war, apart from the date of 27th May 1923, the date of the planned inauguration, which featured on the 1923 series. This series was even marketed as a commemorative stamp for the inauguration of the memorial and the visit of the Belgian crown prince. Interestingly, even though these special stamps played a vital role in the funding and creation of the memorial, with the 25-cent stamp even having been cited in the “*Guinness Book of Stamps*”, the *Gëlle Fra* never featured on any Luxembourgish stamps until 2023, the memorial’s centenary year.⁴⁷²

As more funds were being collected and the construction works continued, a relevant point was raised by Batty Weber, referring to a newspaper article in *Obermoselzeitung*. A Luxembourger had anonymously donated money with the intent that the money could be used to bury an unknown Luxembourgish soldier underneath the memorial.⁴⁷³ To this Weber could only agree, noting that if France has its *soldat inconnu* underneath the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris, Luxembourg has even more reasons to have a similar symbol. He argued that the *Monument du Souvenir*, which he also called ‘*légionnaire* monument’ was being erected on soil that is void of any remains of the fallen soldiers from the battlefields. By burying an unknown Luxembourgish *légionnaire*, the war memorial would also become the final resting place for all Luxembourgers that died during the war for France. Being unknown and nameless, he is not just someone, but everyone, and it would give this monument more value and a soul,

⁴⁷¹ Link, R. (1999) *Tîmberen fir d'Gëlle Fra*. *Ons Stad*, n° 60, p. 8.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 8

⁴⁷³ Weber, B. (1921) *Abreißkalender*. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (01.10.1921).

according to Weber.⁴⁷⁴ This statement by Weber and his choice of words in relation to the unknown *légionnaire* representing everyone who died for France supports anew the post-war pro-French narrative. At the same time, the collective term *légionnaire* excludes any Luxembourgers who might have died serving in other armies and their grieving families.

Despite these solid arguments by Weber, the idea of incorporating this tomb into the *Monument du Souvenir* was not considered by the committee, according to René Clesse in an article from 1999.⁴⁷⁵ In an earlier publication from 1986 by Guy May, however, it is stated that preliminary preparations were made to have an unknown soldier buried underneath the monument. Eventually, this project was later taken up by a separate committee in charge of another war memorial to be built at the *Cimetière Notre-Dame* (see Chapter 7).⁴⁷⁶

While it was decided to forego the laying of the foundation stone as a result of the unexpected delays during construction, a small ceremony took place on 30th November 1922. During this ceremony, several official documents, portraits of Grand Duchess Charlotte and her family as well as of representatives of the government and a list of names of those involved in this project were walled into the memorial. Furthermore, soil and pieces of shrapnel from the battlefields where Luxembourgish *légionnaires* had fought were deposited inside the memorial.⁴⁷⁷ The deposition of those remnants of the battlefields would hence forever link the memorial directly to the war. This is then perhaps the soul that Weber had hoped for when he called for the burial of an unknown Luxembourgish *légionnaire* underneath the memorial.

Following this first ceremony, the inscriptions were added to the plinth. This includes a message from Maréchal Foch (Figure 6-3) and General Gillain (Figure 6-4) on either side, both honouring and praising the heroic and courageous Luxembourgish soldiers, in addition to the names of battles where Luxembourgers had fought engraved on the south facing side of the plinth.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁵ Clesse, R. (1999), p. 19.

⁴⁷⁶ May, G. (1986), p. 7.

⁴⁷⁷ Beck, H. (1999), p. 5; Humbel, F. (1999), p. 31.

⁴⁷⁸ Beck, H. (1999), p. 5.



Figure 6-3 Inscription by Foch
© Laura Zenner



Figure 6-4 Inscription by Gillain
© Laura Zenner

6.5 First inauguration

On 27th May 1923, after a visit to the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu* at the *Cimetière Notre-Dame* (see Chapter 7), the *Monument du Souvenir* was finally officially inaugurated in the presence of Prince Félix, prince consort of Grand Duchesse Charlotte. National and international honorary guests, *légionnaires* veterans, family members and a huge crowd were assembled around the *Place de la Constitution* and lining the streets nearby to witness the official ceremony and festivities. Charles Larue, the president of the general committee of the monument along with Gaston Diderich, mayor of Luxembourg City, delivered speeches. The latter thanked all the Luxembourgers that fought on the side of the Allies, who never hesitated to defend their home country and fought relentlessly. The mayor concluded his speech by saying that, in the name of the City of Luxembourg, he places the monument under the guard and protection of the municipality.⁴⁷⁹

Military representatives from France and Belgium as well as members from different federations and associations of foreign and Luxembourgish *légionnaires* also addressed the crowd. Lastly, Prime Minister Émile Reuter recognised the memorial as a great achievement, thanked everyone involved in its realisation and finally expressed the nation's gratitude and thanks to the *légionnaires*. The festivities were concluded by spectacular fireworks bathing the *Gëlle Fra* in splendid light, as described by Henri Beck. The whole ceremony oozed very pro-Allies undertones, with all speeches held in French and the military music playing the French, the Belgian and the Luxembourgish national anthems, thereby fitting and feeding well into the post-war narrative.⁴⁸⁰

Numerous newspapers throughout the country reported on the inauguration of the *Monument du Souvenir* in the days preceding and following the event, some without shying away from sharp remarks. Some of these remarks were directed towards Prince Félix who attended the ceremony instead of Grand Duchess Charlotte who had travelled to Switzerland for recreation. The *Escher Tageblatt* reminded its readership that Prince Félix fought on the Austrian front against

⁴⁷⁹ Beck, H. (1999), p. 6; Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010), p. 51; *Luxemburger Wort*, n° 148 (28.05.1923), pp. 2-3.

⁴⁸⁰ Beck, H. (1999), p. 6; *Luxemburger Wort*, n° 148 (28.05.1923), pp. 2-3.

those armies who fought side by side with France and the volunteers being commemorated by the monument whose inauguration he attended. It is further pointed out that on a day when the whole country expresses its gratitude to those volunteers, the prince consort should observe some distance and honour them “by not pestering the fallen”.⁴⁸¹ The newspaper *Der Arme Teufel* highlighted as well that Prince Félix, despite his naturalisation and being regarded as French by some, fought as a volunteer in the Austrian Army and had thus no place in midst of the commemorative events dedicated to those Luxembourgers who fought and died for the Entente.⁴⁸²

Apart from the critiques surrounding the design and the presence of Prince Félix at the inauguration, the majority of the Luxembourgish press welcomed the new memorial. Several cinemas around the country even showed films from the inauguration ceremony, making it possible for people not able to travel to the capital on a regular basis to still see images of the event and of the monument.⁴⁸³

The *Monument du Souvenir* quickly grew popular among the population and took central stage for various events. These included commemorative events on 11th November but also 14th July (or Bastille Day) during the interwar period. On one hand, this shows how Luxembourg had also adopted Armistice Day, and on the other side Luxembourg’s strong connection to France is evident. As summarised by Gilbert Trausch, the memorial was a clear symbol of Luxembourg’s preference and fondness towards France. Moreover, different state visits from international delegations included a stop at the memorial, such as Ethiopian emperor Negus’ visit in 1924. Accordingly, the *Monument du Souvenir* gained in momentum, significance, function and meaning which went beyond its creators’ intentions, gradually morphing into a national monument.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸¹ *Escher Tageblatt*, n° 119 (25.05.1923), p. 1.

[Own translation]

⁴⁸² *Der arme Teufel*, 20. Jg., n° 798 (02.06.1923), p. 3.

⁴⁸³ Majerus, B. (2007), p. 291.

⁴⁸⁴ Trausch, G. (1985) Der Standort der “Gëlle Fra” in der Geschichte des Landes. In: G. Gengler et al. (eds.) *Monument du Souvenir: eis Gëlle Fra: 1923, 1940, 1984*. Commission gouvernementale pour la reconstruction du Monument du Souvenir, p. 47.

6.6 Destruction by Nazis in 1940

As a memorial with a palpable pro-Allies nuance which slowly turned into a symbol of Luxembourg's freedom and independence, the *Gëlle Fra* was an eyesore to the Nazi invaders from the start.⁴⁸⁵ Many Luxembourgers had continued to lay wreaths or flowers at the monument after the Nazi invasion of 10th May 1940 to showcase their attitude and sentiments. These small acts of resistance did certainly not sit well with the new occupiers. For Gauleiter Simon whose mission it was to lead the Luxembourgers '*Heim ins Reich*' (back home to the Reich), it became clear that all memorials representing Luxembourg's independence, identity or anything pro-French had to go, especially the *Gëlle Fra*.⁴⁸⁶

The destruction of the *Gëlle Fra* by the Nazis is a well-documented and remembered event that still holds a significant spot in Luxembourg's collective memory. Different accounts, photographs, articles but also myths exist about its destruction. One of those myths is that the Nazis wanted to tear down the statue in order to melt it down, thinking it was made of pure gold⁴⁸⁷ - a story I myself have also heard from my grandparents. As remarked by Guy May, some people also thought that the monument might have evaded its destruction if the unknown soldier had been buried there as the Nazis might have seen it as a desecration of a grave.⁴⁸⁸

Historian Paul Dostert delivered a detailed account in an article published in 1999 about the days surrounding the destruction of the *Monument du Souvenir*. On 10th October 1940, Luxembourgish city architect Nicolas Petit was given the order for the removal of the war memorial. Petit initially tried other options such as suggesting the removal of the French inscriptions to save the memorial, but to no avail. After further failed protests, Petit contacted various building companies, yet most refused to be involved in the destruction of the monument. On 19th October, Petit was summoned by *Oberbürgermeister* Hengst who ordered that the municipal building authority should remove the memorial. In contempt

⁴⁸⁵ Scharz, N. (2018) Goldener Schutzengel: Vor 95 Jahren wurde die Gëlle Fra auf der Place de la Constitution eingeweiht. *Luxemburger Wort*, 26/27 May, p. 28.

⁴⁸⁶ Dostert, P. (1999), p. 16.

⁴⁸⁷ Braun, J. (1999), p. 28.

⁴⁸⁸ May, G. (1986), p. 7.

of attempts to delay the process and additional protests by Mayor Gaston Diderich, the demolition of this significant memorial was imminent.⁴⁸⁹

Amidst loud verbal protests and swearing from the civilian population that had gathered around the memorial - most of them students from the nearby secondary school - the obelisk and gilded statue were eventually torn down on 21st October 1940. While the *Gëlle Fra* statue broke into three pieces during the fall, the two bronze male statues had already been dismantled by the stonemasonry company Jacquemart and could be saved. The documents that had been walled into the monument were saved by architect Petit.⁴⁹⁰ The various broken pieces of the obelisk and the plinth were transported to the train station in Hollerich, in the southwest of the city. With the monument gone, flower beds were to be installed where the *Gëlle Fra* once stood in all her glory.⁴⁹¹

The Nazi version differed greatly from the actual events. For example, German newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung* falsely reported that the destruction resulted from aerial bombardment by the British.⁴⁹² The destruction of the memorial was hence twisted by the occupiers in a way that would serve their propaganda purposes. On top of this, the Nazis made plans to erect a new memorial in its place; one proposal, even though never to be realised, was a monument honouring Otto von Bismarck.⁴⁹³

As recounted by Benoît Majerus, the obliteration of the *Monument du Souvenir* found a lot of resonance outside Luxembourg during WWII. The monument became an element of identification for many Luxembourgers living abroad, who had either emigrated years before or fled because of the war. Reports of its destruction circulated around London and even as far as New York where the Luxembourgish community regarded the *Gëlle Fra* as the most representative symbol of their former home country and war experience. The importance of this memorial for these people became palpable when a miniature of the monument (Figure 6-5) was part of a street parade in New York in 1942.⁴⁹⁴ The

⁴⁸⁹ Dostert, P. (1999), p. 16.

⁴⁹⁰ The documents are now stored at the Archives Nationales de Luxembourg.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17

⁴⁹² May, G. (1986), p. 12.

⁴⁹³ Majerus, B. (2007), p. 292.

⁴⁹⁴ Majerus, B. (2007), p. 292.

open protests against its destruction further led to the first arrests of many Luxembourgers active in the resistance being taken to *Villa Pauly*, headquarters of the Gestapo, its cellar being used for interrogation or torture throughout the war, and later transported to prison.⁴⁹⁵ In all, the *Gëlle Fra* is viewed by many patriotic Luxembourgers as the incarnation of their resistance against the Nazis.⁴⁹⁶ Regardless of the pivotal moment the demolition represented during the four yearlong Nazi occupation, and the importance it carried inside and outside Luxembourg, the *Monument du Souvenir* would not return to its former shape and glory until almost half a century later.



Figure 6-5 Miniature of Monument du Souvenir in New York 1942
Standard Flashlight Co New York © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg

6.7 Reconstruction and rediscovery

Partially reconstructed in different phases between 1945 and 1960, the *Monument du Souvenir* was no longer just a WWI memorial. Through the events of WWII, it had solidified itself as a truly national monument, embodying freedom, independence, and identity. Simultaneously, it became a reminder and scar of the brutal Nazi occupation and kindling the flame of the resistance movements.

⁴⁹⁵ May, G. (1986), p. 12; CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (7).

⁴⁹⁶ Roth, L. (1985) *Eis Gëlle Fra vun 1944 bis haut*. In: G. Gengler et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, p. 63.



Figure 6-6 Monument du Souvenir post-WWII
Source: Archives Nationales de Luxembourg

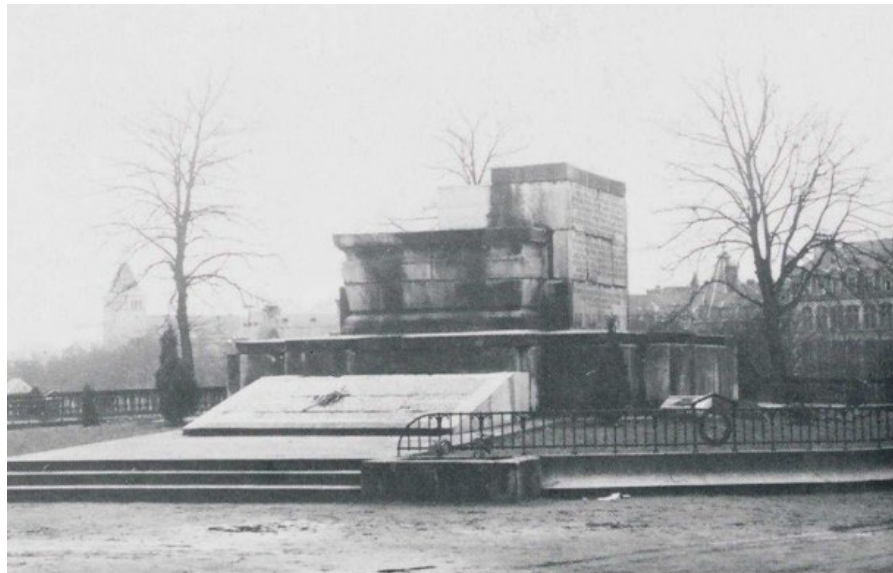


Figure 6-7 Monument du Souvenir before return of the two male bronze statues
Source: Archives Nationales de Luxembourg

In an initial stage and using some of the original pieces hidden away during WWII, the pedestal of the memorial was provisionally reassembled, first resembling a rather haphazardly arranged pile of stones (Figure 6-6 and Figure 6-7). The engraved inscription by Gillain was now to the right with Foch's message positioned at the front. Also, the low railing around the memorial had been modified to accommodate for a wider gap for steps and a pathway, allowing easy access during commemorative events. Following this, was the reinstatement of the two male bronze statues, which had found refuge under a

pile of stones at *Salzhaff* in Hollerich. The two warrior figures were back at the *Place de la Constitution* by June 1951.⁴⁹⁷

In 1957 a special committee was set up for its reconstruction but debates as to how and where to reconstruct this former WWI memorial ensued. Arguments for a relocation were based on the fact that by then the square around the provisional memorial had been repurposed into a car park, which was not seen as suitable for a quiet place of contemplation and remembrance. Further, WWI veterans refused any proposals of relocations or to share their memorial with WWII veterans and resistance fighters. By 1958, a compromise was reached. Following the government's decision, the plinth was to be reconstructed at its original placement and in its original form so that the obelisk can be added at a later stage, paid for by the war reparations funds. Following other international examples, the memorial should, however, also commemorate WWII.⁴⁹⁸

Consequently, new commemorative inscriptions remembering volunteers who fought alongside the Allies in both world wars⁴⁹⁹ were added on a new granite plaque at the front of the memorial, with a moving text by Grand Duchess Charlotte from 1945 engraved on the right side of the plinth (Figure 6-8 and Figure 6-9). The messages by Foch and Gillain were also renewed to the left and back side of the pedestal respectively. Furthermore, an inscription for the small contingent of volunteers from the Korean War was added.⁵⁰⁰ The inclusion of the Korean War, however, caused much disagreement as those who had volunteered in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War did not receive the same recognition (see 6.10 for a follow up on this). The *Monument du Souvenir* thus morphed into a national war memorial, remembering multiple conflicts in one place, thereby giving it a broader consensus.⁵⁰¹

Different official and commemorative events were still held at the memorial, including ceremonies on 11th November as reported in different newspapers, but

⁴⁹⁷ Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010), pp. 57-59.

⁴⁹⁸ Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010), p. 60; Roth, L. (1985), p. 71.

⁴⁹⁹ The "Zwangsrekrutierter", those forcibly conscripted into the Wehrmacht, are however not remembered on this monument, having their own separate memorial.

⁵⁰⁰ Names of the battles where the 85 Luxembourgers fought and a message by Grand Duc Henri was added after his succession to the throne in 2000, although no precise date could be found.

⁵⁰¹ Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010), p. 60; Camarda, S. (2020), p. 193; CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (11).

also for the *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale* (National Commemoration Day) on the Sunday closest to 10th October. Since 1946, this commemorative day remembers the fight, resistance, and solidarity of the population during the Nazi occupation and its victims. The main ceremony was moved during the 1970s to the newly constructed *Monument national de la Solidarité luxembourgeoise* (National Monument of Luxembourgish Solidarity).⁵⁰² Nonetheless, a visit to the *Monument du Souvenir* is still part of the official commemorative programme to this day.



Figure 6-8 Monument du Souvenir during 1960s
Source: Archives Nationales de Luxembourg



Figure 6-9 Monument du Souvenir after partial reconstruction
Source: Archives Nationales de Luxembourg

⁵⁰² Roth, L. (1985), p. 73.

Having obtained a new meaning and dimension, this ‘new’ *Monument du Souvenir* and the *Place de la Constitution* had completely changed in appearance: the car park remained - its implications and current state to be reviewed and discussed in more detail below (see 6.10) - and the rebuilt *Monument du Souvenir* henceforth only consisted of its plinth and the two male bronze figures. Yet, the 21-meter-high obelisk and most notably its namesake the *Gëlle Fra* statue were missing. The memorial was no longer visible from a distance, with the statue reaching up into the sky. The perception and impression of this memorial must have differed greatly from its pre-WWII version, likely leaving older generations with a strange feeling upon seeing it. Nevertheless, the memorial was still known by many under its nickname, with the expression ‘*bei der Gëlle Fra*’ to refer to the *Place de la Constitution* even adopted by the post-war generations despite never having seen her in the flesh.⁵⁰³

What had happened to the angel of peace, as some Luxembourgers called the statue? With most of the population unaware of the gilded figure’s fate or whereabouts, different stories and myths continued to circulate around the memorial’s destruction and the *Gëlle Fra*’s subsequent disappearance. Most popular remained the myth that the Nazis had melted down the statue so as to reuse the raw material and thus forever gone.⁵⁰⁴

Among those who grew up hearing these stories about the *Gëlle Fra* by word of mouth was author and journalist Josy Braun who would later be directly involved in her rediscovery. In an article, Braun pointed out that people might have read the inscriptions at the base on passing by and learnt about the Luxembourgish combatants from WWI, but over time, and especially among the younger generations, interest in this partially re-erected memorial diminished. They seemed unphased that the memorial was missing its main statue, with only the older generations reminding them that there once stood a gilded female statue.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰³ Braun, J. (1981), p. 3.

⁵⁰⁴ Braun, J. (1999), p. 28.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

As recounted by Braun, the missing gilded statue seemed partially forgotten and no longer a topic of discussion for many years. This changed abruptly in spring 1981, when Braun had a surprising encounter with the *Gëlle Fra* statue in the most unlikely of places. In a detailed and partly amusing account, Braun recounted how he had received an insider tip from another journalist that the statue still existed and was hidden in a storage room underneath one of the stands of the national sports stadium, the *Stade Josy Barthel*. The staff at the stadium were at first very reluctant to let Braun and a photographer in saying it was ‘taboo’, which only confirmed that the rumours must be true. On the condition that no photographs would be taken, Braun was finally guided to the place where the *Gëlle Fra* statue was kept hidden for years, still broken into three pieces.⁵⁰⁶

Braun continued to depict what happened on the days that followed his discovery including a talk with the then mayor of Luxembourg City. During this meeting, it became clear that the mayor and others were well aware of the statue’s whereabouts. This leads to the question as to what the reason was behind this lowkey conspiracy. The reaction from a retired city archivist, who was fully aware of the situation, gives more insights into this mystery. As quoted by Braun, the archivist had asked the mayor upon hearing of Braun’s discovery: “You are not really considering restoring this horrible woman, are you?”⁵⁰⁷

The old critique of the *Gëlle Fra*’s offensive nakedness on top of what was supposed to be a war memorial can consequently be seen as one of the driving forces for this secrecy. Braun confirmed this by adding that the same arguments by critics in 1923 might still have been valid for some people post-WWII, believing that an indecent female statue did not belong next to the cathedral. For some, who knew about the statue’s whereabouts but kept her hidden, were of the opinion the memorial as a whole was simply ‘hideous’. Another possible reason was to purposely keep the memorial in its broken state as a reminder of its brutal demolition in 1940.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁶ Braun, J. (1999), p. 28; CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (14).

⁵⁰⁷ Braun, J. (1999), p. 29.

[Own translation]

⁵⁰⁸ Braun, J. (1999), p. 29; Braun, J. (1981), p. 3.

Benoît Majerus names another reason as to why certain WWII groups and associations successfully opposed the reinstatement of the *Gëlle Fra* for a long time, their pressure even preventing the municipal council of Luxembourg City from applying the decision for the complete reconstruction in the 1950s. Majerus continues that the *Gëlle Fra* was strongly associated with the figure of the soldier in the context of WWI which in turn rendered the construction of memory of WWII problematic. The number of Luxembourgers having served in the Allied forces stood in stark contrast to the mass of Luxembourgish youth forced into the Wehrmacht under the Nazi decree of 1942.⁵⁰⁹



Figure 6-10 The broken *Gëlle Fra* at Semaine de la Resistance in 1955
Tony Krier © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg

What makes the whole disappearance of the *Gëlle Fra* even curiouser from a contemporary perspective, is the fact that the fragmented pieces, which had been concealed under a pile of stones by company Jacquemart until the end of the war, were put on display at a two-week long exhibition in 1955 (Figure

⁵⁰⁹ Majerus, B. (2007), pp. 293-294.

6-10), held as part of the *Semaine de la Résistance* (Week of Resistance). The *Gëlle Fra*'s short public appearance, before eventually being transported to the stadium at an unknown moment in time by those who wanted her gone, make it therefore difficult to understand how the long-held myth that the Nazis had reduced the statue to liquid gold could survive as even photographs of this exhibition exist. It has been argued that the public held a certain fondness for telling this much more tragic version, so that even after the 1955 exhibition when the statue disappeared again from public view, the myth turned into an accepted truth for many.⁵¹⁰

When Braun published his article “*D’Gëlle Fra 40 Jahre versteckt gehalten! Warum?*” (The Gëlle Fra hidden for 40 years! Why?) a few days after his discovery, many readers initially thought it was a hoax. But on 27th June, pictures of the newly polished statue were printed in the national newspapers for everyone to admire, removing all and any doubts. People were still perplexed by this revelation and even angered that the statue paid for by the nation had been purposely hidden for decades.⁵¹¹

6.8 Second inauguration

As a figure of national identity, freedom and independence, the population wanted their angel of peace to be fully restored, but this turned out to be a longer process. Braun showed his discontent that initially nothing seemed to be happening with various discussions held among politicians and associations as to what to do with the broken statue.⁵¹² Some favoured the integral reconstruction of the 1923 memorial, others opted for a lower obelisk while again others wanted to see the statue placed at a different location, such as at the *Musée National de la Résistance* (National Museum of Resistance) in Esch-sur-Alzette. The argument to keep the memorial as it was then sans *Gëlle Fra* as a visual expression of what had happened on that fateful day in October 1940 was also still present, especially among former WWII resistance fighters. However, as correctly noted by Braun, viewing the current partial memorial as such a

⁵¹⁰ Roth, L. (1985), pp. 63-73; Braun, J. (1999), p. 29; Camarda, S. (2020), p. 193; Wiroth, D. (2023) Déi onbekannte Säit vun der Gëlle Fra. *RTL*, 27 May.

⁵¹¹ Braun, J. (1999), p. 29.

⁵¹² CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (7).

reminder completely missed its purpose as there were in fact no indications either in form of a plaque or information panels with older photographs to inform younger generations or tourists of what had occurred.⁵¹³

Eventually in 1983, a committee was set up for the complete reconstruction of the memorial and reinstatement of the statue. Like in the 1920s, most of the funding came from the public with the remaining funds provided by the State, the City of Luxembourg, several banks and even cheques from the German and French ambassadors. Likewise, Jacquemart was also again involved in the reconstruction works. The second inauguration was originally planned for 8th May 1985, which would also mark the 40th anniversary of VE Day. Braun emphasised that no other day would be more suitable than the 8th May.⁵¹⁴

For a monument initially created to remember the volunteers of WWI to have its second inaugural event on a very significant date related to WWII already demonstrates a clear shift in meaning, function, and perception of this memorial. No mentions of the dates of 27th May (date of first inauguration) or 21st October (date of destruction) as options for this second inauguration could be found during this research, which both would have been fitting and meaningful dates. Equally, the 11th November, and thereby tying it back to its original purpose as a WWI memorial, does also not seem to have been considered.

Nonetheless, it was eventually on 23rd June 1985, on Luxembourg's National Day that the *Monument du Souvenir* complete with a new obelisk and its repaired *Gëlle Fra* was re-inaugurated. Choosing this specific date holds immense value and importance as it bestows a more national and unifying identity to the monument. As underlined by Majerus, this was further solidified by the fact that the 1980s were already characterised by and witnessing a certain rise of nationalist sentiment alongside a memorial and historical wave. The decade marked the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Luxembourg by US troops, with 1989 marking the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of London and thus the birth of

⁵¹³ CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (7); Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010), pp. 61-63.

⁵¹⁴ CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (12); Roth, L. (1985), p. 79; Braun, J. (1999), p. 29.

the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.⁵¹⁵ At the same time, it demonstrated the memorial's multi-functional purposes and dimensions, because as commented by Josy Braun, the *Gëlle Fra* represents those from WWI, those from WWII, those from today and those from tomorrow; in other words, all Luxembourgers.⁵¹⁶



Figure 6-11 Plaque at Monument du Souvenir, October 2021
© Laura Zenner

In the presence of Grand Duc Jean, son of Grand Duchess Charlotte and Prince Félix, the second inauguration was attended by 3,000 people, both national and international, distinguished guests, members of government and parliament, the military, as well as veterans (no distinctions being made in the sources whether they were from WWI or WWII) and members of resistance organisations. Moreover, an impressive contingent of the *Légion étrangère* was present, echoing the original motive of the memorial and the long held pro-Allies attitude, which was further characterised through the French national anthem "*La Marseillaise*" and Belgian national anthem "*La Brabançonne*" played at the event, followed at the end by the Luxembourgish national anthem "*Ons Heemecht*". Different speeches were held, also reminding the attendees of the memorial's original meaning, before emphasising the new dimension this

⁵¹⁵ Majerus, B. (2007), p. 294.

⁵¹⁶ CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (13).

memorial acquired since 1940. Four small informative plaques (Figure 6-11), written in Luxembourgish, French, German, and English were also unveiled, telling the story of the memorial, thereby finally fulfilling the purpose as a reminder of its destruction in 1940 which was missing since the memorial's partial reconstruction.⁵¹⁷

Although the memorial was restored in the image of its 1923 version, there are, however, two noticeable differences. As the statue was toppled down from the obelisk in 1940, the gilded lady's feet, which appeared to have stood almost on tiptoes atop a sphere, got damaged. Since the restoration, the *Gëlle Fra* has new feet and stands flat footed. More importantly, the statue also suffered a so-called '*coup de lapin*' (whiplash) during her fall. In other words, the *Gëlle Fra* broke her neck and is henceforth not looking straight ahead but down. This gives the statue and memorial a different effect and meaning to the initially intended design (Figure 6-12). With her original forward-looking gaze, the *Gëlle Fra* gave the impression of looking towards freedom, infinity, and peace. Now with her head bend down, she looks down at the two male statues⁵¹⁸, and simultaneously at the people below her, almost giving the impression of protector and guardian. The *Gëlle Fra*'s reference as angel of peace thereby gained new momentum.



Figure 6-12 Gëlle Fra from 1923 (Fonds de Coene © La Fonderie) and Gëlle Fra after rediscovery (Marcel Tockert © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg)

⁵¹⁷ CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (15).

⁵¹⁸ Wiroth, D. (2023).

6.9 Gëlle Fra – debates and controversies

Despite the critiques about the memorial's design in the interwar period, its destruction during the Nazi occupation, the subsequent disappearance and the secrecy surrounding the whereabouts of its namesake until the 1980s, the *Monument du Souvenir* crowned by the *Gëlle Fra* statue is today an integral part of Luxembourg City's skyline and one of the most visited landmarks of the country. Nowadays, it would be hard to imagine Luxembourg City without this gilded lady atop the *Monument du Souvenir* or in fact that the statue could again find herself amidst strong disputes and controversies. Different events in the past 20 odd years prove otherwise, the *Gëlle Fra* making headlines in various newspapers in 2001 and again in 2010, sparking an avalanche of debates and strong reactions by the public.

The first controversy did not concern the memorial itself, but a temporary art installation titled "*Lady Rosa of Luxembourg*" by Croatian contemporary artist Sanja Iveković, nicknamed 'Croatia's Monumental Provocateur' by *The New York Times*. Having been invited to participate in Manifesta 2 (The European Biennial of Contemporary Art) in 1998, the artist had initially intended to have the statue removed from the memorial to be placed on the premises of a shelter of abused women, but this proposal was deemed controversial and was not realised.⁵¹⁹

A couple of years later, in 2001, Iveković was invited again for an exhibition organised by *Casino Luxembourg* and the *Musée d'Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg City History Museum), for which she created her artwork "*Lady Rosa of Luxembourg*": a replica of the statue visibly pregnant standing on a lower obelisk, its base covered with words in French (*la résistance, la justice, la liberté, l'indépendance*), in German (*Kitsch, Kultur, Kapital, Kunst*) but also in English (*whore, bitch, Madonna, virgin*), placed only a few meters away from the original *Gëlle Fra*. With the artwork's title also alluding to Marxist Rosa Luxemburg, thereby setting it in concrete historical circumstances, the artwork is meant to underscore the underrepresentation of

⁵¹⁹ Kino, C. (2011) Croatia's Monumental Provocateur. *The New York Times*, Dec.; Camarda, S. (2020), p. 193.

women within history and also society while challenging the ideals of masculine heroism and the conventions of collective memory.⁵²⁰

The artwork caused an immense backlash with a myriad of articles, letters to the editors and comments by enthusiasts and opponents of the artwork alike. The temporary artwork and its implied critique of Luxembourg's national symbol even became the subject of two parliamentary debates. Demands were made for the resignation of the then Minister of Culture who had declined the calls for the demolition of the artwork. Anti-fascist veterans and liberal-national politicians saw "*Lady Rosa of Luxembourg*" as nothing less than blasphemy and regarded the artwork as a mockery of Luxembourg's resistance during WWII and its victims in both world wars. Interestingly, the most violent critiques were not caused by the pregnant statue but the text on the base. The artwork was meant as a socially and aesthetically aware provocation, and considering the reactions it kindled, it accomplished exactly what it was set out to do.⁵²¹

Less than a decade later, in 2010, it was the *Gëlle Fra* herself that caused heated discussions in Luxembourg's media and online. Public opinions were divided when it was announced that the statue would be removed and shipped to Shanghai to be exhibited at the Luxembourg pavilion at the World Expo 2010. The fact that a war memorial, or in this case the most recognisable component of the memorial, is travelling around the world in order to represent its country is in and of itself extraordinary and unprecedented. The idea was an initiative by Robert Goebbels from socialist party LSAP, who had been appointed as High Commissioner for the Luxembourg pavilion in Shanghai. After proposing to send the *Gëlle Fra* to Shanghai, Goebbels was told that he was crazy but that he should try it. As the memorial belongs to the State and not the City of Luxembourg, then Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker made the approval of the government dependent on the reaction and opinion of the representatives of the WWII resistance groups, who applauded the idea.⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Kino, C. (2011); Marcoci, R. (2011) Sanja Iveković: Lady Rosa of Luxembourg. *MoMA – Inside/Out*; Ilić, N. (2001), pp. 22-24; Camarda, S. (2020), p. 193.

⁵²¹ Kino, C. (2011); Marcoci, R. (2011); Ilić, N. (2001), pp. 22-24.

⁵²² As cited in Goetz, M. (2023) Geliebt, geschasst und fast vergessen - „Gëlle Fra“: Ein umstrittenes Monument wird 100. *Tageblatt*, 28 May.

While many welcomed the idea of the *Gëlle Fra* representing Luxembourg at the world exhibition and even had a ‘why not’ attitude, there was also much criticism in press and social media expressing fear and concern that the statue might get damaged on that long journey, one person commenting that this ‘*madame*’ might not endure this whole trip. Others saw her as a national symbol of Luxembourg which belongs at *Place de la Constitution* and should thus not leave the country, having no business in faraway China. Another person would instead have preferred a new art piece by a national sculptor with a representative value to be sent to Shanghai, as for that person, the *Gëlle Fra* cannot represent him, therefore also showing different opinions and attitudes towards this memorial and statue.⁵²³

The moment the *Gëlle Fra* was removed by crane from the obelisk in March 2010 had everyone present overseeing or simply witnessing this event waiting with bated breath for her to safely reach the ground as at that moment there was no mould of the statue to recast her. Her trip to Shanghai and temporary absence was thus also an opportunity to exactly do that, as well as a general restoration of the statue.⁵²⁴ Before returning to the *Place de la Constitution* after her eventful trip to Shanghai, the *Gëlle Fra* travelled to Bascharage, hometown of her sculptor Claus Cito, for another exhibition offering visitors the chance to see the statue up close and personal. As an initiative by the town’s mayor Michel Wolter, and after earning some critique due to high cost, this exhibition turned out to be a success attracting 37,000 visitors between 10th December 2010 and 23rd January 2011.⁵²⁵

Although the 2001 art installation was only temporary and the *Gëlle Fra*’s trip to Shanghai was a huge success, being the most photographed attraction there with 10.7 million visitors⁵²⁶, the strong reactions by the press and public demonstrate a clear sensitivity when it comes to this gilded lady. These recent events that add to the memorial’s rich biography, demonstrate that the *Gëlle Fra* as synonym for the *Monument du Souvenir* is anything but a mute, invisible or

⁵²³ Weber, S. (2023) 100 Joer Gëlle Fra - E Monument am Wandel vun der Zäit. *RTL*, 27 May; Goetz, M. (2023) – see also video from 03.03.2010.

⁵²⁴ See video from 03.03.2010: Weber, S. (2023).

⁵²⁵ Scharzt, N. (2018), p. 29; Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010).

⁵²⁶ Scharzt, N. (2018), p. 29; Dorscheid, S. and Reitz, J. (eds.) (2010), pp. 88-90.

static war memorial tucked away in a corner which becomes only a point of interest during commemorative events, such as on *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale*, or on 11th November, though to a lesser extent.

To get a better understanding of the memorial's importance, place within everyday life, appearance and surroundings from a contemporary perspective, the next section will present the results recorded during the phenomenological exercise.

6.10 Phenomenological survey results

In contrast to the other WWI memorials that I have visited as part of the phenomenological survey, the *Gëlle Fra* was no stranger to me, having walked past and seen this memorial with its famous gilded statue countless times. In summer 2018, I even had the opportunity to admire the statue from an unfamiliar angle. Following the success of the previous year, the City Skyliner, an 81-meter-high mobile and rotating observation tower set up on the *Place de la Constitution*, offered visitors amazing views of the city and *Pétrusse* valley. While the observation tower slowly ascended, visitors were even briefly at eye level with the *Gëlle Fra* before getting a bird's eye perspective; two perspectives greatly differing from the usual view from the ground looking up at the statue.

Apart from having seen this memorial from different vantage points, I had heard, as so many people who grew up in Luxembourg, about the events of 1940 and the statue's long residence underneath the stands of the stadium.⁵²⁷ As a result, I already had preconceived ideas and a pre-existing knowledge and experience of this memorial before starting the survey. These are some of many variables mentioned in Chapter 3 that need to be acknowledged within phenomenological archaeology, highlighting again that this methodology is neither scientifically replicable nor objective.

⁵²⁷ The details of this fascinating chapter of the statue's biography, however, only became known to me during this research.

Nevertheless, when carrying out fieldwork, I tried to follow the same pattern, guided by the same research questions, as with the other memorials, without letting my pre-existing experience and knowledge of this memorial cloud or influence the results too much; however, these factors cannot be fully eliminated. The *Gëlle Fra* is also one of the very few memorials which I visited on multiple occasions during my research: the primary fieldwork was carried out in August 2021, with additional shorter visits in October 2021, July 2022, and December 2022, each time with varying observations as elaborated below.

During the first survey in August 2021, and with its location well-known, I decided to approach the memorial coming from *Place d'Armes*, one of the main squares of the city centre, always frequented by many locals and tourists alike (see Appendix 2). An information panel indicating different city attractions has one of its arrows pointed towards *Place de la Constitution* with the words *Gëlle Fra* in brackets, emphasising again that the memorial is usually not referred to as *Monument du Souvenir*. This also makes the *Gëlle Fra* the only known WWI memorial in Luxembourg with signposting. Albeit knowing where to go, I followed the signposting down *Rue Chimay* as advancing towards the memorial from this direction would give me a frontal view.

When approaching the memorial from *Place d'Armes*, the memorial only becomes visible once reaching the end of *Rue Chimay* due to buildings on both sides of this street. This differs greatly from other directions. When coming from *Luxembourg Gare* (the capital's central train station), either via *Pont Adolphe*, which also carries the tram line, or via *La Passerelle*, the memorial comes into view almost immediately once standing on either of the two bridges crossing the *Pétrusse* valley due to the open views and the old bastion's balcony effect. Even though this way, the *Gëlle Fra* is distinguishable from afar, the memorial is first only seen from a distance and only from the back. Still, these perspectives offer great and inviting views, of which Batty Weber wrote back in 1919.

Geographically speaking, the *Monument du Souvenir* is indeed ideally located at its chosen place, showing the committee's efforts into finding the most suitable setting. Much more could be said about these differing vantage points at this stage, opening opportunities for comparisons, but for the purpose of the

phenomenological survey, I had decided to limit my experience and impressions of the *Gëlle Fra* as coming from *Place d'Armes*.

At the intersection of *Rue Chimay* and *Rue Notre Dame*, I came across another signpost and from there the memorial slowly came into view. As already mentioned elsewhere, the *Place de la Constitution* with *Monument du Souvenir* placed in the middle, is located close to the intersection of two boulevards and is nowadays a busy traffic artery, with a constant flow of cars and buses. This certainly causes various distractions visually but also audibly, making the *Gëlle Fra* the 'noisiest' WWI memorial space in Luxembourg. Adding to these visual and audible intrusions, was the small summer funfair at the *Place de la Constitution* with stalls and rides set up all around the monument (Figure 6-13).

This square has for many decades been one of the central locations for festivities on the eve of Luxembourg's national holiday, with big crowds gathering at the square as it offers fantastic views of the fireworks display. For this occasion, I saw the memorial lit up in Luxembourg's national colours: red, white, and blue. In more recent years, the *Place de la Constitution* has also hosted different markets, especially for Christmas - as also observed during my visit in December 2022 - and the *Octave*⁵²⁸ which have been extended from their usual locations at *Place d'Armes* and *Place Guillaume II* respectively. Through this, the *Gëlle Fra* is now amid annual celebrations and traditions, attended by thousands each year. During summer 2021, due to the pandemic, it was decided to hold smaller funfairs throughout the city, including at *Place de la Constitution*, rather than having the big annual funfair *Schueberfouer* usually held at *Parking Glacis* in Limpertsberg, to manage crowd control.

No matter the occasion, augmented noise and visual distractions are therefore main consequences of these events being held around the memorial. At the same time, these events account for a greater influx of people at this square on top of the usual number of tourists visiting one of the city's main sights. While taking notes and photographs during the fieldwork, I could thus notice several people stopping in front of the memorial to take snapshots, and even what appeared to

⁵²⁸ Catholic holiday celebrated in Luxembourg on the third Sunday after Easter.

be a primary school class on an excursion posing for a group photo in front of the memorial. Additionally, the square is popular among tourists as stairs leading down to the entrance of the *Pétrusse Casemates*⁵²⁹ (and public restrooms), as well as a kiosk selling various souvenirs are located on this square.



Figure 6-13 Monument du Souvenir with funfair, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

The *Monument du Souvenir* is also the only WWI memorial studied where smell plays a factor. On both my visits in August 2021 and December 2022, smells of fried and sweet food coming from stalls as part of the summer funfair and Christmas market (Figure 6-14) were very dominant, certainly an unusual observation to make when visiting a war memorial. Apart from the smell, the presence of food and drink stalls have another consequence. In August 2021, I

⁵²⁹ Series of underground tunnels of the old fortifications.

observed two youths sitting on one of the low pillars with the flagpoles, flanking the steps leading up to the monument, and sipping on drinks, as if consuming food and drink right next to a war memorial is common practice (Figure 6-13). Similarly, during the Christmas market, many people gather on the square and all around the memorial, enjoying their *glühwein* and street food - I myself have been to the Christmas market at the *Gëlle Fra* many times in the past years. This illustrates to what extent this war memorial has become an integral part of different events and everyday life, with some people likely not even fully aware that this is a memorial space.



Figure 6-14 Christmas market at Place de la Constitution, December 2022
© Laura Zenner

Standing in front of the memorial, with the back turned to the road and buzzing city centre, any visitor can look straight onto the memorial with the semi-circle of trees and the greenery of the *Pétrusse* valley in the background, offering a picturesque atmosphere. From this perspective, not just the time of year but also the time of day can be decisive in someone's perception and experience of this memorial. While the leaves on the trees naturally change throughout the year, and the rides and food stalls come and go depending on season and festivities, the position of the sun can bask the memorial in different lights. One of my visits occurred around midday, with the sun at its zenith. Facing the

memorial around that time, the sun almost creates a halo effect behind the *Gëlle Fra* giving the notion of angel of peace a whole new context (Figure 6-15).



Figure 6-15 Monument du Souvenir with sun in background, October 2021
© Laura Zenner

The memorial's central position and openness of *Place de la Constitution* make it possible to completely walk around and admiring it from all sides. The design of the area at the front suggests its use during commemorative events as there is a clear path leading to the steps of the monument and the sections left and right of this path suggesting the area where attendees are supposed to stand (see Figure 6-16). Towards the back is a small sign attached to the low balustrade surrounding the memorial reminding anyone to respect the monument and to not climb it. It was the only example of such a warning noted during my research. The need for this sign might indicate that such attempts have occurred in the past.



Figure 6-16 Monument du Souvenir, July 2022
© Laura Zenner

The trees lined up in a semi-circle at the back give this memorial site a pleasant and leafy atmosphere. However, the trees also slightly affect visibility of the monument depending on vantage point, which of course changes during winter. Nevertheless, given the obelisk's height of 21 metres, the trees never hide the statue. It goes without saying that during times when funfairs and markets take place at this square, the different rides and stalls greatly impact the visibility, especially of its lower section and inscriptions.

Since its partial reconstruction after WWII when the low circular balustrade was interrupted to integrate steps leading up to the memorial, visitors are able to approach the memorial, either to admire it or to deposit flowers. During my visit in July 2022, two bouquets of already dried up flowers were still lying on the plaque at the front, indicating that the memorial is still being actively visited

(Figure 6-16). Furthermore, only by going up the three steps did I notice the four small informative plaques on the ground (two on either side) that were added during the second inauguration in 1985. I have little recollection of noticing these plaques before carrying out this fieldwork, though I might have absentmindedly seen them. As these plaques are positioned on the ground, they do not disrupt the overall appearance; yet, it can also be assumed that most people walking by the memorial are likely to overlook these plaques and consequently not read about the memorial's demolition in 1940 - much like I was unaware of the plaques' presence before carrying out the phenomenological survey which required me to be hyperaware of my surroundings.

In addition to the funfair taking place in August 2021, the memorial was cordoned off by barricades as the two soldier statues and the plinth were in the process of being cleaned and curated (Figure 6-13). This clearly indicates the care that goes into maintaining this memorial, and the importance it holds as a national symbol and representative of Luxembourg, further highlighted by the two Luxembourgish flags on each side of the memorial. Considering that the *Gëlle Fra* is one of the main tourist attractions, it is only logical that time and money is being invested in its maintenance. Nevertheless, due to the barricades, the inscriptions on the plinth were only partially visible.

When visiting the memorial again a few months later in October 2021, the barricades were gone, the soldier statues visibly cleaned, and fresh wreaths were placed before the memorial as part of the aforementioned *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale* taken place prior to my visit. Even though this annual commemorative day is linked to WWII, with other ceremonies held at various WWII memorials throughout the country, it demonstrates the *Gëlle Fra*'s continued use over time and the place it holds within Luxembourg's remembrance of post-WWI conflicts. As mentioned above and visualised through the different inscriptions, the *Gëlle Fra* encompasses all twentieth century conflicts in which Luxembourgers were involved, and since October 2021 also the volunteers who fought in the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War against Franco (Figure 6-17). The maintenance work observed in August 2021 was therefore twofold and prompted further research into this matter.



Figure 6-17 Detail of inscription in honour of International Brigades
© Laura Zenner

Having been excluded from the memorial during its partial reconstruction period when inscriptions remembering the volunteers from the Korean War were added, the recognitive message of the 102 men who had joined the International Brigades was unveiled on the *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale* on 10th October 2021.⁵³⁰ This had followed a renewed debate as to whether or not these volunteers should be part of the memorial. As reported in the news, in late 2018, the association *Amis des Brigades Internationales-Luxembourg* had sent a request to Prime Minister Xavier Bettel to have a new inscription added. Remaining unanswered, the request was brought up in a parliamentary question a couple of years later and finally passed on to the *Comité pour la mémoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale* (Committee for the Memory of the Second World War) to be put to a vote. Although the majority of the members were in favour, there was still a substantial and vocal minority voting against this idea. As noted by the committee's president, Claude Wolf, the objections were not about questioning or denying the courage and merits of these 102 volunteers, but rather about whether it is still relevant nowadays to honour them on a memorial that remembers individuals from both world wars. It was instead proposed to

⁵³⁰ Le gouvernement luxembourgeois (2021) *Journée de commémoration nationale*.

find a more modern alternative.⁵³¹ Despite divided opinions and clear objections, an inscription for the Luxembourgish volunteers of the International Brigades was eventually added to the back of the plinth 82 years after the end of the Spanish Civil War, expanding the memorial's multiplicity of meanings and purposes.

With the barricades gone after the maintenance work was completed, not only are the inscriptions all around the plinth's four sides completely visible, but it also allowed me to fully approach the memorial and the inscription plaque at the front. This plaque listing the dates for WWI and WWII and the respective theatres of war where Luxembourgers fought, along with the Korean War, is slightly inclined. Hence, the best way to easily read the text is to stand in front of it. There seems to have been a clear intention of inviting visitors to engage with this memorial up close through of the addition of the steps and inclined plaque, rather than positioning this plaque vertically which would have been more visible from a distance.

In spite of its central location, the picturesque panoramic views of the *Pétrusse* valley and the visibility it offers, there is a downside to this square apart from it occasionally being used for funfairs and markets, which takes away from its attribution and significance as a memorial site. As noted above, in the 1950s the *Place de la Constitution* had acquired a new modern function: a car park. This was one of the main reasons why the special committee from 1957 had proposed a relocation. Yet, the memorial remained at its original place and henceforth coexisted with the car park. The issue of the car park was raised again during the reinstatement of the *Gëlle Fra* statue. In 1985, Josy Braun commented on the improvement plans of the square by removing the car park as part of the restoration of the memorial, which he wholeheartedly welcomed. After decades of cars and buses parking all around the memorial, the *Place de la Constitution* was to become a green zone.⁵³² Almost 40 years later, these plans to redesign

⁵³¹ Everling, P. (2021) New plaque at Golden Lady? Divided opinions on commemoration of International Brigades. *RTL*, 13 January.

⁵³² CNL L-398; I. 6.6.2 (13).

this square by making it a car free zone have still not been implemented, as observed during my visits in October 2021 and July 2022 (Figure 6-18).



Figure 6-18 Monument du Souvenir surrounded by cars, October 2021
© Laura Zenner

Nevertheless, the long-awaited redevelopment of the *Place de la Constitution* is finally to be realised in the upcoming years, although details as to when and how are still under discussion at the time of writing. The winning project of a competition is being considered which would see the car park transformed into a pedestrian and multi-purpose square, including the construction of a lift leading down to the *Pétrusse* valley. The project also envisions kiosks, benches, and a new alley of trees to accentuate the framing towards *Rue Chimay* and on the other side towards the balcony of the old bastion, offering an unobstructed view over the valley. The memorial will not be modified or moved in any way, but the project proposes a new planted parterre and light installations for night-time illumination effects.⁵³³ It remains to be seen when and how the square around the *Gëlle Fra* will be revamped in the future and how this will impact the

⁵³³ Coubray, C. (2022) La place de la Constitution réaménagée. *Paperjam*, 12 September; Nouvelle Place de la Constitution: Le parking au pied de la Gëlle Fra va disparaître. *RTL*, (09.11.2022).

memorial physically and symbolically but hopefully the redevelopment plans will return some of the historic, commemorative, and symbolic values to this area.

6.11 Chapter Summary

The rich but turbulent biography of the *Monument du Souvenir* and its gilded statue, the *Gëlle Fra*, which experienced more than one eventful adventure, bestows this war memorial multiple meanings and functionalities. It is thus not just a WWI memorial, but through the addition of WWII, the Korean War and most recently the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War inscriptions, it is a war memorial for all major conflicts that Luxembourgers participated in. But it goes beyond its intended purpose as a war memorial: the *Gëlle Fra* is without a doubt the best-known monument in Luxembourg, having transformed into a true national emblem. By evaluating this memorial's evolution over the past century, it can even be argued that the *Gëlle Fra* had three distinct social lives: one before and one after her destruction, and finally one after her rediscover and reinstatement.

Given its central location, with small funfairs or markets taking place at different times of the year, and as a general point of interest for tourists with cars and busses all around it, it is a very active and lively memorial site, demonstrating the impact surroundings can have. The *Gëlle Fra* at the *Place de la Constitution* is not just a place for remembrance but an integral part of Luxembourg's everyday life and culture. As will be elaborated in Chapter 10, the *Gëlle Fra* even holds a place within popular culture, a uniqueness that almost no other war memorial has achieved. In Gilbert Trausch's words, no other memorial in Luxembourg has such an eventful history or high symbolic value ascribed to it by the people. The memorial has its place in Luxembourg's cityscape and in the country's history.⁵³⁴

⁵³⁴ Trausch (1985), p. 62.

Chapter 7 Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre & Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu



Figure 7-1 Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

7.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the biography of the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre* (or French Mausoleum) which incorporates the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu* (Figure 7-1). Although the focus remains on what can only be described as a truly transnational war memorial, having in more than one sense merged Luxembourg and France together in bricks and mortar, references are also made to commemorative services for the war dead held during and after the war, the burials of US soldiers in the interwar period and the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof* in Clausen. For reasons already mentioned, no detailed case study has been carried out for the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof*, its gravestones and memorial plaque, as it falls outside the parameters of this thesis. Nevertheless, this chapter offers a short history of this old Prussian military cemetery before, during and after WWI, thereby providing more context

to the general memorialisation of WWI and contrast between the burials, reburials and memorialisation of WWI soldiers from different nationalities in Luxembourg.

7.2 Soldier burials in Luxembourg 1914-1919

Even though Luxembourg was never part of the Western Front and did not experience active fighting on home soil, soldiers from France, Germany and the US were buried in Luxembourg. Exhumation and repatriation in the 1920s saw some of these men return to their home countries, yet a significant number of foreign soldiers remain in Luxembourg to this day. Before explaining the presence of these WWI soldiers even a hundred years after the hostilities have ended, the reasons as to why they were interred in Luxembourg in the first place must be addressed.

The occupation of Luxembourg by Imperial Germany and being used as a deployment zone and '*Hinterland*' naturally explains the large contingent of German troops passing through the country from August 1914 to November 1918. During this period, a total of 222 German soldiers were inhumed at various local cemeteries all over Luxembourg, including towns in the south-east, Luxembourg City, Diekirch and Wiltz, as supported by Tony Ginsbach's "*Documentation Historique*" and research by Thomas Kolnberger.⁵³⁵ The vast majority of these inhumations took place during the first months of the war following the so-called Battle of the Frontiers⁵³⁶, after transportable wounded soldiers succumbed to their injuries at Luxembourgish medical facilities used by the German military. Although small in number, other German casualties resulted from accidents, with two German soldiers dying from sunstroke during their march and buried in Burmerange, close to the Luxembourgish-German border. Interestingly, and adding to those 222 German soldiers, one soldier who fought under the Austrian flag, Hans Schmidt, died at a staging hospital in Eich in 1915 after being wounded in Serbia, and was buried in Clausen. How or why he found himself in Luxembourg after being wounded in Serbia is not detailed in the

⁵³⁵ ET-DH-15; Kolnberger, T. (2018a) Tote Soldaten und ihre Gräber: Kriegs- und Militärfriedhöfe des Ersten Weltkrieges in Luxemburg. In: C²DH (2018) *Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*, pp. 4-5.

⁵³⁶ Battle of the Frontiers from 7th August to 13th September 1914, fought near Luxembourg, the closest being the Battle of Longwy (22nd to 25th August) to the south-east of Luxembourg, less than 10 kilometres away.

“*Documentation Historique*” or Kolnberger’s research.⁵³⁷ While the presence of German soldiers, and subsequently the burial of their sick or injured are understandable and expected, how can the inhumation of French and US war dead at Luxembourgish cemeteries be explained?

During the dual occupation of Luxembourg by US and French troops after the Armistice, several US soldiers were treated at the field hospital in Walferdange, the United States Evacuation Hospital Nr. 13. As the hostilities had already ended by this time, the cause of death of these soldiers most probably resulted from after-effects of injuries, but for the majority they succumbed to illnesses, most likely the Spanish flu.⁵³⁸ In April 1919, an area initially designated for the construction of a new school was transferred to the American military administration for the burial of 71 US soldiers (or 74 depending on sources)⁵³⁹, although Kolnberger mentioned that around 60 ‘doughboys’ were buried at local cemeteries in Walferdange, Echternach, Ellange and Diekirch.⁵⁴⁰

Every soldier, among them Catholics, Protestants and Jews, received a proper burial with military salute. The simple white wooden coffins draped with the American flag were carried by their comrades to the cemetery, the graves marked by crosses, or the star of David, and decorated with flowers by local schoolchildren. These burials at Walferdange were however short-lived, with their repatriation in 1920 leaving no reminders of the old military cemetery in Walferdange.⁵⁴¹ During the 1980s, a small memorial plaque was installed at the cemetery of Walferdange remembering these US soldiers (see Appendix 1 for more details).

The total number of French soldiers buried in Luxembourg, mostly within the south of the country or Luxembourg City, ranges between 62 and 75, depending on sources. Like their German counterparts, they were casualties from the Battle of the Frontiers, transported to Luxembourg as prisoners of war or for

⁵³⁷ ET-DH-15; Kolnberger, T. (2018a), p. 4.

⁵³⁸ Kolnberger, T. (2018a), p. 10.

⁵³⁹ Feider, N. and Walferdange Administration communale (2000). *150 Joer Gemeng Walfer: 1851 - 2000*. Walferdange: Administration communale, pp. 107-109.

⁵⁴⁰ Kolnberger, T. (2018a), p. 10.

⁵⁴¹ Bour, J. (1987) Der amerikanische Militärfriedhof in Walferdingen. In: *Walferdingen, Bereldingen, Helmsingen: Beiträge zur Lokalgeschichte herausgegeben zum Jubiläum der Gesangsvereine und der Musikgesellschaft 1987*. Walferdange, pp. 336-339.

treatment at one of the lazarettos, and ultimately dying from wounds or illness.⁵⁴²

Contrary to most French and British military cemeteries observing a stricter separation of friend and foe, and even of soldiers from their dominions and colonies, burial practices at German military cemeteries did not always follow that same distinction. Consequently, they were more of a mixed nature, and in some cases soldiers from opposing sides were even interred next to each other.⁵⁴³ This practice was also observed by the German occupiers at Luxembourgish cemeteries during the war. This resulted in German and French soldiers being buried in single rows of graves side by side, commonly at the periphery of a cemetery. In some rare cases, French and German soldiers even shared a grave, as evident by lists of burials published in *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise* after the war. Even the old Prussian military cemetery (nowadays known as *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof*) in Clausen for the military and civilian personnel of the former Prussian garrison and their families was used for the inhumation of soldiers of both nationalities. Thereupon, 60-70 German soldiers were laid to rest in groups together with 15-20 French soldiers at this cemetery in Clausen, which had gained a new lease of life after almost falling into oblivion after the departure of the Prussian garrison.⁵⁴⁴

While the nationality of each soldier was distinctively and consistently mentioned, inscriptions like “*Morts pour la patrie*” or “*Gefallen für das Vaterland*” did not feature on the simple, white-painted wooden crosses. Albeit uniform in style, Kolnberger’s research on the military cemeteries in Luxembourg pointed out that some German graves were individualised, indicating visits by family members during and shortly after the war. During that same time, official military commemorative ceremonies for all soldiers took place in Clausen and other cemeteries throughout the country on *Toussaint*, or All Saints’ Day.⁵⁴⁵ However, a shift in attitude towards these commemorative

⁵⁴² Kolnberger, T. (2018a), p. 5; Kolnberger, T. (2018b) Eine andere Migrationsgeschichte - tote Soldaten der Grand Guerre im Luxemburger Erzbecken In: A. Reuter et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁵⁴³ Kolnberger, T. (2018a), pp. 7-8

⁵⁴⁴ Kolnberger, T. (2018a), pp. 7-8; Kolnberger (2019) Friedhof, Heldenhain oder Totenburg? In: S. Kmec et al (eds.) *Ewige Ruhe? Grabkulturen in Luxemburg und den Nachbarregionen*. Luxembourg: Capybarabooks, p. 104; *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 50. Jg., n° 330 (25.11.1920), p. 2.

⁵⁴⁵ Kolnberger, T. (2018a), pp. 7-8; p. 11.

events occurred in the interwar period, a time that also saw the separation of friend and foe.

7.3 Toussaint commemorative services

As is customary in Luxembourg, *Toussaint*, or All Saints' Day on 1st November (with All Souls' Day on 2nd November), marks an important occasion in the Christian calendar for remembering the dead by visiting cemeteries and laying down flowers on graves. As a result, official ceremonies to remember the war dead also occurred on these days in Luxembourg between 1914 and 1918, which can be regarded as the first official and public WWI remembrance events in Luxembourg.

An article from November 1915 in *Escher Tageblatt* provides details about such an event at the communal cemetery in Esch-sur-Alzette. Both the German and French graves, which were decorated for this occasion, were visited by a German delegation in the morning followed by a French delegation in the afternoon. Not only were wreaths laid down at the French and German graves by their own respective parties, but the Germans laid down wreaths at French graves and vice versa, with also a wreath from the Austrian delegation. This was followed by wreaths with ribbons of the countries' respective national colours by the municipality of Esch-sur-Alzette and speeches from each contingent.⁵⁴⁶ This simple, yet compassionate and respectful act amid a bloody war between these two nations signified that "the hatred amongst nations falls silent at the burial mounds."⁵⁴⁷ The ceremony was described as dignified and not tarnished by any dissonance with the article concluding with the words "may there be peace next All Saints' Day."⁵⁴⁸

This commemorative and almost fraternising day did not end there. It was followed by a gathering at *Salle Hoferlin* organised by the French delegation to propose the construction of a communal memorial for German and French soldiers, which was applauded by Brettschneider, the spokesperson of the

⁵⁴⁶ *Escher Tageblatt*, 3. Jg., n° 257 (02.11.1915), p. 2.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[Own translation]

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2

[Own translation]

German delegation. As noted in an article, reconciliation does not seem that difficult when both sides are willing, because “what could be more beautiful and sublime than when Germans and French shake hands over the graves of their fallen soldiers.”⁵⁴⁹ During the course of the same week a committee was to be formed which should consist of two French, two German and two Luxembourgish representatives as well as a representative from the municipality as proposed by the French chairman Chilot-Altmeier.⁵⁵⁰ Yet, this plan seems to have been completely abandoned as no such memorial for soldiers from both sides of the trenches exists in Luxembourg. Using different search terms on the database “*eLuxemburgensia*” did not produce results for any follow-up articles on this matter. Nevertheless, it is still interesting that such an idea for a communal or even trans-European memorial uniting both sides of the conflict already tried to take shape during the war in a ‘neutral’ country positioned exactly between France and Germany.

A year later, similar commemorative events occurred at the old Prussian military cemetery in Clausen attended by a considerable crowd. *Luxemburger Wort* reported how, like the previous year, the city administration took it upon themselves to honour the memory of the soldiers who died in local hospitals and whose families cannot visit their graves. Apart from members of the municipality and from the Luxembourgish officer corps, other visitors included Colonel Tessmar, who was the commander of the German troops in Luxembourg, and other German officers. Representatives from the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish community were also present. All graves were decorated with chrysanthemums and apart from wreaths with ribbons in their respective national colours, there was no other apparent difference. The memorial service commenced with a funeral march by the grand ducal brass band, followed by a German and French poem recited by Walter Colling and a song by the *Landsturm* (Imperial German reserve force).⁵⁵¹

The “*Documentation Historique*” provides photographic evidence that a similar memorial event took place in 1917 at the cemetery in Clausen. All in all, it can

⁵⁴⁹ *Escher Tageblatt*, 3. Jg., n° 258 (03.11.1915), p. 3.
[Own translation]

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁵¹ *Luxemburger Wort*, 69. Jg., n° 308 (03.11.1916), p. 3.

be concluded that the commemorative services for the fallen German and French soldiers during the war were of communal and trans-European nature by uniting both sides of the conflict, even if only for this occasion. Moving into the post-war era, a clear shift occurs which will further aid to construct and support the post-war narrative.

From the “*Documentation Historique*” and the collected newspaper articles therein, a great sense of the importance of these annual ceremonies on either 1st or 2nd November in the early years of the post-war era is apparent, for lack of an official war memorial at that time. Simultaneously, a clear pro-French attitude and a greater focus towards the Luxembourgish *légionnaires*, who were absent in the remembrance events during the war, emerged in the early 1920s. With this, any idea of a more trans-European commemoration as witnessed during the war seems to have been abandoned to make way for a rather Allied-centred form of memorialisation and commemoration, and to have a clearer separation of German and French soldiers within Luxembourg.

This shift did, however, not manifest immediately after the hostilities had ended and after the Germans were forced to retreat, being replaced by French and US troops occupying Luxembourg in the aftermath of the war. The French presence in Luxembourg up until December 1923 is certainly decisive during this time of commemorative events and decisions behind Luxembourg’s memorialisation efforts. While wreaths were also laid on the graves of French soldiers for France’s national holiday on 14th July 1919 at different cemeteries, the services for *Toussaint* that year still saw wreath laying on the tombs of both nations, albeit an emerging pro-French sentiment.⁵⁵²

According to an article from 3rd November 1919, it was predominantly members of the *Société Française de Bienfaisance* and the *Alliance Française* who had been invited to the events alongside a few Luxembourgish officials, French officers, and soldiers. Nevertheless, both the French and German graves had once again been decorated for this occasion, an initiative by the city administration, also at the old Prussian military cemetery in Clausen. The floral

⁵⁵² ET-DH-15.

wreath from the government was embellished with a tricolour ribbon which read the rather neutral words “*Le Gouvernement Grand Ducal aux glorieux morts de la grande guerre*” (The grand-ducal government to the glorious dead of the Great War). In his speech, French Colonel Paquin alluded to how during the war it was the Germans who stood here by these graves on this day but now the French could honour their fallen. Following this, the president of the *Alliance Française*, Dumont, expressed his thanks for France, stressing that France also liberated Luxembourg, and concluded his speech with a “*Vive la France!*” which was echoed by those present.⁵⁵³

The memorial service in Clausen was followed by a subsequent service at the neighbouring *Cimetière du Val des Bons Malades (Sichenhaff)*, the location of the monument commemorating the French soldiers who died in Luxembourg during Franco-Prussian War (Chapter 5). As a result, the generally French and Francophile cohort that had gathered at the cemetery in Clausen to remember the fallen victorious French soldiers of WWI were also honouring the fallen defeated French soldiers of the antecedent war with Prussia. Colonel Paquin exclaimed “*Camarades, nous sommes là!*” (Comrades, we are here!) and informed the heroes of the defeat of 1870-1871 that Alsace and Lorraine are once again united with France.⁵⁵⁴ During this service, mentions were made of the annual pilgrimage by the *Société Française de Bienfaisance* and the Francophile community to this memorial site, and that the long-cherished dream of freedom had finally come. Exclamations of “*Vive la France!*” could once again be heard. The same article also reported that a small group of officers and soldiers visited the cemetery in Hollerich, where a number of French soldiers were buried, for a wreath laying, with a second wreath sponsored by different organisations of Hollerich. Yet, there was no mention found of a visit to the *Monument des Communards* also located at *Cimetière du Val des Bons Malades* (Chapter 5).⁵⁵⁵

While the *Toussaint* service at the cemetery in Clausen still incorporated the German war graves, the memorial service at *Cimetière du Val des Bons Malades* and Hollerich had a distinct French tone to them; a tone which would become

⁵⁵³ *Escher Tageblatt*, n° 306 (03.11.1919), p. 3.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

more prominent in subsequent years. At the same time, the union between France and Luxembourg became ever more palpable. Consequently, the newspaper *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise* reported in November 1920 of the memorial services organised by the reconstituted *Le Souvenir Français* (see section 7.5), stating how the French soldiers had died on “*sol ami*” (on friendly soil). The events of that day were almost analogous to the one from 1919 with a visit to Clausen and then *Sichenhaff*, but with the exception that the German graves were not commented on.⁵⁵⁶ This raises the question if the German graves were not visited or simply not mentioned in the article. More poignantly, an article in *Soziale Republik* from 1921 about the memorial service held on 2nd November at Differdange noted that the town’s mayor praised the heroism of the French soldiers who had saved them from the barbarians, while the local priest “anxiously tried to avoid letting a drop of the holy water fall onto the German graves” lying next to the French.⁵⁵⁷

A similar series of events as described above unfolded over the next two years at the cemeteries in Clausen, *Sichenhaff*, and Hollerich until another major shift - once again marked by a pro-French sentiment - occurred in 1923 with the construction of a dedicated mausoleum for French soldiers (see section 7.6).

7.4 Repatriations and reburials

The mobilisation of the war dead in the 1920s in an effort to bring this lost generation back to their homeland consequently led to the search, identification, exhumation, and eventual repatriation of thousands of soldiers across the globe. The reasons behind this were as much political as they were pragmatic, often playing into the heroisation of those who fought and died for their country, as noted by Kolnberger. Even though not every nation participated in this large-scale repatriation effort of its war dead - such as the UK and Commonwealth - it still saw the creation of specifically purposed war cemeteries.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁶ *L'indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 50. Jg., n° 308 (03.11.1920), p. 2.

⁵⁵⁷ ET-DH-15.

⁵⁵⁸ Kolnberger, T. (2018b), pp. 128-129.

Repatriation and formation of war cemeteries also affected the French and German soldiers temporarily buried in Luxembourg. Once laid to rest side by side, they were to be either returned to their home country or reburied at a designated cemetery or communal burial place, thereby physically and visually separating both sides. The German war dead who were not repatriated were all relocated to the cemetery in Clausen during the 1920s.⁵⁵⁹ To this day, this cemetery cared for by the *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V.* (German War Graves Commission) is the final resting place of 205 German soldiers from WWI - including aforementioned Hans Schmidt who fought under the Austrian flag - to which 262 soldiers from WWII were added.⁵⁶⁰

Only a small number of French soldiers were exhumed and returned to their native land, among them the two French aviators shot down over Differdange in 1917 (see Chapter 9 for details on a memorial plaque for one of the aviators). A total of 56 Frenchmen remained in Luxembourg who either had no families to claim them, or their families had decided to let them rest where they had died.⁵⁶¹ In the same vein as the German war dead being grouped and reunited at Clausen, a separate and dedicated reburial was also envisioned for the French soldiers who had died in Luxembourg. The result was the creation of the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre*. Apart from being the final resting place for these 56 French soldiers, this memorial was to take on another dimension having a dual purpose and significance by incorporating the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu*, the country's equivalent of the tomb of the unknown soldier. This unknown Luxembourgish soldier was to be buried side by side in the mausoleum's crypt together with his French brothers in arms (see section 7.6).

7.5 Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof Clausen

With the French soldiers being exhumed and either repatriated or reburied at the French Mausoleum, it was also decided to regroup all German soldiers previously buried at various local cemeteries at the old Prussian military

⁵⁵⁹ Philippart, R. (2014) Le mausolée du soldat inconnu. *Luxemburger Wort - Die Warte*, n° 29/2451, 13 Nov, pp.6-7.

⁵⁶⁰ Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e.V. (n.d.) *Kriegsgräberstätten: Luxemburg – Clausen*.

Note: a new German military cemetery for the casualties from WWII was established in Sandweiler in the 1950s.

⁵⁶¹ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 52. Jg., n° 91/92 (01.04.1922), p. 2.

cemetery throughout the 1920s. A special committee consisting of German expatriates residing in Luxembourg, the *Ausschuss zur Schmückung und Unterhaltung der deutschen Kriegergräber in Luxemburg*, led by Otto Sames was quickly set up to decide on how to design and care for the German graves. The idea to create a memorial for these Germans soldiers, however, raised some concerns among the German envoys in Luxembourg, considering their status and their tainted relationship with Luxembourg since the war, as commented by Thomas Kolnberger.⁵⁶² Consequently, the thought of an open and public memorial honouring those who had only few years ago invaded and occupied the small country would certainly aggravate certain circles within Luxembourg. Nonetheless, as noted by German envoy Ferdinand von Gülich, the redesign of the cemetery itself into a dignified place of burial would be a different matter.⁵⁶³

That Luxembourg had sided with the Allies, and which was reinforced and personified through its war memorialisation in the interbellum, must have also been very obvious to the German envoys. It was therefore concluded that the design of the cemetery should be undertaken in complete silence and restraint. Kolnberger cites Ferdinand von Gülich, who was of the opinion that if the design of the old military cemetery was to be perfectly executed, in comparison to the rather dull and artless French war cemeteries, it might draw the approving attention of the Luxembourgish people and raise Germany's reputation again in Luxembourg. Through this, von Gülich hoped to see an internal rapprochement of Luxembourgers to the Germans, and to rally the fragmented German community. This would then finally pave the way for the construction of the planned war memorial.⁵⁶⁴

Different plans for this war memorial for the German soldiers were already drafted during the 1920s. Robert Tischler, chief architect of the *Volksbund* proposed the extension of the old garrison cemetery with a central axis leading to a sunken and walled square with a cross, with the graves of the soldiers rearranged around it. Kolnberger remarks that these plans were, however,

⁵⁶² Kolnberger, T (2019), pp. 103-105.

⁵⁶³ As cited in Kolnberger, T (2019), p. 105.

⁵⁶⁴ As cited in Kolnberger, T (2019), p. 105.

drawn up without Tischler having been to the cemetery, not realising that such a plan was not feasible given the premises of the cemetery.⁵⁶⁵ A further plan was drafted by Bernhard Pfau, yet also never to be realised as intended. Due to financial issues, it was only in 1934 that the keystone of the construction project for the envisioned memorial was laid, replacing the provisional wooden high cross.⁵⁶⁶ This keystone was however removed in 1945 as part of a ‘historical dismantling’, as phrased by Wolfgang Held, likely in an effort to erase any such German traces after WWII.⁵⁶⁷ The graves of the German soldiers remained intact, as the cemetery itself has been under monument protection since the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁶⁸

With the rearrangement of the graves completed at the upper section of the cemetery, an official re-inauguration of the cemetery took place on 1st November 1928, attended by Mayor Gaston Diderich, Prime Minister Joseph Bech and also former Prime Minister Émile Reuter, now President of the *Chambre des Députés*. The cemetery now being the permanent home and official memorial site for these German WWI soldiers, it also symbolised a sort of ‘counterweight’ to all the other memorials which centralised their former opponent France, according to Kolnberger. On the other side, for the Luxembourgers it settled the question of maintenance, and the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof* could be seen as a sign of the German-Luxembourg rapprochement.⁵⁶⁹ According to monthly magazine *Kriegsgräberfürsorge* from 1929, yearly services for *Toussaint* on 2nd November were still held at the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof* during that period, attended by the mayor of Luxembourg City and the prime minister, thereby confirming that German graves were still visited.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁵⁶⁶ Kolnberger, T. (2019), p. 107; *Obermosel-Zeitung*, 48. Jg., n° 63 (15.03.1928), p. 3.

⁵⁶⁷ Held, W. (1993) *Der preußisch-deutsche Garnisonsfriedhof Clausen, Luxemburg-Stadt*. Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e.V., p. 8.

⁵⁶⁸ Kolnberger, T. (2019), p. 107.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁵⁷⁰ Kriegerfriedhof Clausen (Luxemburg) Gedächtnisfeier. *Kriegsgräberfürsorge*, 9, Heft 12, December 1929, p. 185.



Figure 7-2 Plaques with names of WWI German soldiers at Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof Clausen, with granite crosses at the back, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

After WWII, the aforementioned Robert Tischler was able to redesign the cemetery in Clausen along with the new cemetery in Sandweiler for German WWII soldiers. The result was the instalment of several granite crosses in groups of three to mark the graves. On 5th June 1955, the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof Clausen* was again officially inaugurated.⁵⁷¹ A total of eight name plates were also envisioned to list the names of WWI soldiers, as mentioned in *Kriegsgräberfürsorge* in 1970.⁵⁷² Even though these eight name plates were never realised in that form, there are four large plaques listing all 205 names close to the entrance of the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof*, as also observed during my visit in summer 2021 (Figure 7-2). More details about when exactly these four plaques were installed could not be found during this research, neither through correspondence and consultation with the archives of the *Volksbund* or the *Archives de la Ville de Luxembourg* (Luxembourg City Archives).

⁵⁷¹ Kolnberger, T. (2019), pp. 110-112; Luxemburg. *Kriegsgräberfürsorge*, 42, Heft 2, February 1966, p. 29; Fritzsche, A. and Habekost, A-C. (eds.) (2005) *50 Jahre Kriegsgräberstätte Sandweiler / Luxemburg - Aus der Vergangenheit für die Zukunft lernen*. Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e.V., p. 26.

⁵⁷² Luxemburg. *Kriegsgräberfürsorge*, 46, Heft 1, January 1970, p. 14.

7.6 A transnational memorial

The Luxembourgish division of *Le Souvenir Français*, an association founded in 1887 with the aim of honouring the memory of all those who died for France, irrespective of nationality, and maintaining war memorials in and outside its borders⁵⁷³, was the main driving force behind the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre*. It was in fact not the first memorial dedicated to French soldiers who had died on Luxembourgish soil. In 1874, *Le Souvenir Français* erected the aforementioned memorial located at the *Cimetière du Val des Bons Malades*.⁵⁷⁴

On 14th January 1923, *Le Souvenir Français* first announced in the press their new project in conjunction with the municipal council of Luxembourg City and the French authorities for the construction of a mausoleum to incorporate the tomb of the unknown soldier. This new memorial was to be located at the new elevated section towards the back of the *Cimetière Notre Dame* in Limpertsberg.⁵⁷⁵ This initiative was further supported by the *Alliance Française*, *Société Française de Bienfaisance*, *Association des Dames Françaises*, *Union des Femmes de France*, *Amicale des Anciens Engagés Volontaires Luxembourgeois de la Grande Guerre* and the *Anciens de l'École Normale Supérieure*.⁵⁷⁶

This war memorial has an undeniable link not just to Francophiles and French societies within Luxembourg but also to France directly, making it much more of a transnational rather than national or local memorial and standing apart from other war memorials studied in this thesis. Thomas Kolnberger and Sonja Kmec, writing on transnational soldiering, burial, and commemoration across borders by taking the Luxembourgish *légionnaires* of WWI as their case study, even argue that this monument never became a focal point of national commemoration.⁵⁷⁷ Although it can be agreed that this mausoleum did not acquire the same prestige as the *Monument du Souvenir* as a national monument, its role in different commemorative events listed in section 7.11 demonstrate that it was still

⁵⁷³ Le Souvenir Français (2023) *Notre mission*.

⁵⁷⁴ Philippart, R. (2014), pp. 6-7.

⁵⁷⁵ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 187.

⁵⁷⁶ Philippart, R. (2014), pp. 6-7.

⁵⁷⁷ Kolnberger, T. and Kmec, S. (2022) Transnational Soldiering, Burial and Commemoration across Borders: The Case of Luxembourgers in the French Foreign Legion. *FRANCIA: Forschungen zur Westeuropäischen Geschichte*, Band 49, p. 321.

considered an important and relevant memorial site within Luxembourg throughout most of the twentieth century.

The transnational element of the mausoleum is further apparent when considering the funding. *Le Souvenir Français* partially financed the memorial, with the Luxembourgish government also contributing to the costs. The rest of the funds were collected through public fundraising like other Luxembourgish WWI memorials at the time. However, unlike the other WWI memorials, the initiative for the mausoleum and tomb benefited from the patronage of Grand Duchess Charlotte.⁵⁷⁸

As will be discussed in section 7.7 and then section 7.12, the choice of location entails consequences that mainly affect its visibility within the public space, its awareness as a WWI memorial site, and its place within Luxembourg's collective memory from a contemporary perspective. This can be seen as a possible explanation as to why it could not attain the same status as the *Monument du Souvenir* or even the *Hinzertter Kräiz* located at the same cemetery, alongside its evident transnational character with heavy French connotations.

7.7 Location

Limpertsberg is one of the most affluent quarters of Luxembourg City, mainly residential and often associated with the city's upper class. Likewise, the *Cimetière Notre Dame* earned a certain standing. Described as a sort of national pantheon of Luxembourg, it is the final resting place of wealthy and influential Luxembourgish families, politicians such as Paul Eyschen, but also celebrities, all with opulent gravestones or mausoleums. In a way, this cemetery can be compared to *Père Lachaise* in Paris. In consequence, choosing the *Cimetière Notre Dame* as the location for a mausoleum for French soldiers - the heroes and victors of the Great War - and the tomb of the unknown soldier can be interpreted as nothing but a very deliberate and symbolic choice.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁸ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 187.

⁵⁷⁹ Philippart, R. (2014), pp. 6-7; Camarda, S. (2020), pp. 187-188.

Considering that the mausoleum is the final resting place for these French soldiers and the unknown Luxembourgish soldier, choosing a cemetery rather than any other public location is logical. Nonetheless, it also lends the whole memorial a more religious connotation. It is also interesting when comparing this choice of location to some other locations of tombs of the unknown soldier elsewhere in Europe. While the British unknown warrior was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey in London, thereby also acquiring a more religious character and linked to other well-known Brits buried in the abbey, the French unknown soldier was buried at the *Arc de Triomphe*, thereby irrevocably changing the original meaning of this war memorial initially meant to remember and celebrate Napoléon's victory at the Battle of Austerlitz.

Over the course of the last century, other war memorials were added in or around this cemetery and thereby close to the mausoleum. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the *Hinzerter Kräiz*, the *Klëppelkrich Monument*, the *Monument du Maquis* along with two commemorative WWII street names, the *Allée des Résistants et des Déportés* and the *Allée de l'Unioun*, have created a sort of memorial site or thematic district with a particular focus on WWII, all literally and figuratively linked to each other. Being located at the far back of the cemetery, the mausoleum does not, however, completely fit into the overarching theme of this memorial site. Whereas the mausoleum and especially the tomb of the unknown soldier seek to underline that Luxembourg was one of the Allies, it does not fit into the narrative of resistance. As will be elaborated in section 7.12, despite the mausoleum's grand size, it still seems to be overshadowed by the other memorials situated at the front of the cemetery, making them much more visible and hence appearing to take precedence.

7.8 Design and inscriptions

Designed by architects Joseph Nouveau and Léon Muller, with marble and wrought iron decorative elements crafted by Hubert Jacquemart and Michel Haagen respectively, the mausoleum comprises of a visible top section and a crypt underneath. On a slightly raised platform, the top section forms a

rectangular enclosed structure consisting of a central wall at the back and two side wings leaving the structure open at the front (Figure 7-1 and Figure 7-3).⁵⁸⁰



Figure 7-3 View of mausoleum showing the side wings with the swords, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

The central wall features different decorative elements and a cross in the middle. On top, the main inscription reads: “*Aux soldats français de la Grande Guerre morts dans le Grand-Duché*” (To the French soldiers of the Great War who died in the Grand Duchy) with the dates of 1914 and 1918 on each side, all in a gold-like colour. The decorative elements next to the main inscription are meant to represent the French *Croix de guerre*. On the inside of the central wall and side wings are white marble plaques, each naming one of the 56 French soldiers (Figure 7-3 and Figure 7-4). Both ends of the side wings are adorned with a wrought iron sword entwined with laurel branches which sits within a cross-shaped indentation (Figure 7-3). To give the mausoleum a pleasant and calming atmosphere, different plants were also used. Overall, the memorial’s design has been described as simple and linear creating a dignified impression.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁸⁰ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 187.

⁵⁸¹ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 187; *Luxemburger Wort*, 77. Jg., n° 322 (17.11.1924), p. 2; see also AE 00682.



Figure 7-4 Detail of marble plaques, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

Positioned in the middle, a concrete slab resembling a coffin represents the tomb of the unknown Luxembourgish soldier, also doubling as the entrance to the crypt (Figure 7-3 and Figure 7-5). The crypt is constructed out of reinforced concrete and features rows of individual alcoves in which the French soldiers and the unknown Luxembourgish soldier have been reburied. The top of this concrete coffin is decorated with a cross and laurel branches, placed there during the inauguration, with the epitaph “*Ici repose un légionnaire luxembourgeois inconnu*” (Here rests an unknown Luxembourgish *légionnaire*).⁵⁸² It paints the visual picture of the unknown soldier sleeping surrounded by his fallen brothers in arms who, just as on the battlefields, stand guard around him, as printed in *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*.⁵⁸³

⁵⁸² Camarda, S. (2020), p. 187.

⁵⁸³ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 321/322. Edition de midi (16.11.1924), p. 1.



Figure 7-5 Tomb of the unknown Luxembourgish soldier, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

The choice of words is interesting: not only does it echo the phrasing of the *Tombe du Soldat Inconnu* in Paris, but the word *légonnaire* rather than the more general term *soldat* was chosen. As cited by Kolnberger and Kmec,

“[t]he commemoration of the unknown soldier was modelled on that of other countries: a rite to overcome the corporeal challenges of identification, exhumation and reburial. It provided a sur-real placeholder for all unclaimed, unidentified and missing dead. Because his namelessness stood in for all other names, his tomb could become a national pilgrimage site.”⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁸⁴ Kolnberger, T. and Kmec, S. (2022), p. 321.

Yet, how can this be achieved in the case of Luxembourg if the tomb only relates, at least through its inscription, to a particular archetype, namely the *légionnaire*?

At this stage, it needs to be remembered that *légionnaire* is not an umbrella term for all the Luxembourgish WWI volunteers even if some primary and secondary sources seem to adopt it as such. This is perhaps similar to the term *poilus* to refer to the WWI French infantry. The term *légionnaire* should thus only be used when it in fact relates to someone who fought in the *Légion étrangère*. The designation volunteer, combatant or soldier is therefore preferred when referring to those Luxembourgers, or those of Luxembourgish descent, who fought or were otherwise actively involved in foreign armies during WWI. Even though this unknown Luxembourgish soldier buried within the mausoleum was in fact a soldier of the *Légion étrangère* - his exhumation and repatriation discussed below - the argument could be made that the more general appellation *soldat inconnu* should have been chosen for the epitaph. Even different newspapers and the general public used this term throughout the years, referring to the memorial as *Mausolée du Soldat Inconnu*. As it stands now, the focus solely remains on the *légionnaires* and the direct connection to France, which reinforces the strong Franco-Luxembourgish character of the memorial, likely the desired effect at the time, but concurrently it seemingly, even if unintentionally, excludes those who fought for other foreign armies.

7.9 Search for the *légionnaire inconnu*

As introduced in Chapter 6, the idea of having a tomb of an unknown Luxembourgish soldier first came up during the planning and construction of the *Monument du Souvenir* but was not realised. Still, the desire to have a grave to symbolise and remember all those Luxembourgers not found or identified remained strong and was subsequently to be integrated into the French mausoleum.

For the realisation of this project, an unknown soldier who was undoubtedly of Luxembourgish descent needed to be found. For this, it was important to know where Luxembourgers had fought and were buried along the front. The answer

to this question came from one of the main advocates and donors, Camille Bernard. He had served in the Marching Regiment of the *Légion étrangère* and fought in the Second Battle of Champagne (Bois Sabot) in September 1915 and knew of a grave containing around 80 Luxembourgish *légionnaires* who died during this battle. Together with a delegation from *Le Souvenir Français*, they travelled to the Champagne region in April 1923 to proceed with the exhumation after successfully locating this mass grave. The intact remains of one of these *légionnaires*, as identified by parts of his uniform, were transferred in a coffin back to Luxembourg.⁵⁸⁵

Like the whole concept of this memorial, the repatriation of this unidentified Luxembourgish soldier carried a very Franco-Luxembourgish undertone, with the wagon transporting the coffin decorated in French and Luxembourgish national colours, which both countries share, namely red, white, and blue.⁵⁸⁶ Once arrived in Luxembourg on 18th April 1923, the coffin was transported from the central train station to the cemetery at Limpertsberg in a great procession attended by important official guests and observed by a large crowd lining the streets, with *La Marseillaise* followed by the Luxembourgish national anthem being played. As he was laid to rest among the 56 French soldiers at the memorial still under construction, *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise* reported how “the brotherhood of arms cemented on the battlefields by the pains, the fatigues and the supreme sacrifice shall henceforth continue beyond death.”⁵⁸⁷

While still under construction, Luxembourgish, French and Belgian delegates paid homage to the tomb of the unknown soldier on the morning of the inauguration of the *Monument du Souvenir*. Different distinctions were awarded to mark the occasion: the *Ordre de la Couronne de chêne* (Order of the Oak Crown) and the aforementioned commemorative medal *Médaille des Volontaires Luxembourgeois de la Grande Guerre de 1914-1918* for Prince Félix; the Belgian *Croix de guerre* for Prince Léopold, Duke of Brabant; and the French *Croix de guerre* for General de Lardemelle.⁵⁸⁸ Regarding these honorary distinctions,

⁵⁸⁵ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 53. Jg., n° 107 (17.04.1923), p. 2.

⁵⁸⁶ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 53. Jg., n° 108 (18.04.1923), p. 1.

⁵⁸⁷ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 53. Jg., n° 109 (19.04.1923), p. 2.

[Own translation]

⁵⁸⁸ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 188.

Sandra Camarda asserts how they are the result of a delicate political operation aimed at sustaining a balance of power between these three countries, as evidenced by the diplomatic exchanges after 1918.⁵⁸⁹ The following section will further contextualise these political, but also economic, aspects in relation to this transnational memorial.



Figure 7-6 Mausoleum still under construction after the burial of the unknown soldier in April 1923
Source: Archives Nationales de Luxembourg

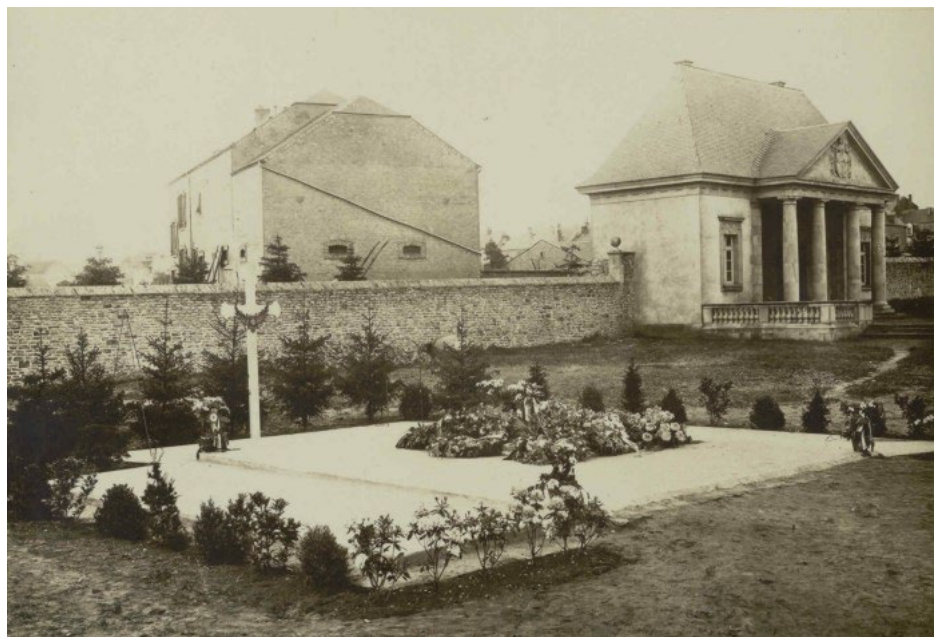


Figure 7-7 Mausoleum on morning of the inauguration of the Monument du Souvenir in May 1923
Source: Archives Nationales de Luxembourg

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

7.10 Inauguration

The mausoleum and tomb were officially inaugurated on 16th November 1924, the Sunday following Armistice Day. No clear indication or link between this commemorative day and the reason for choosing this date for the inauguration could be found in primary sources, with only Kolnberger and Kmec mentioning the proximity of these dates.⁵⁹⁰

Families of fallen volunteers gathered at the cemetery, joined by Luxembourgish officials and members of the municipality and government along with countless organisations and associations. Both the French and Belgian prime minister had been invited and had travelled to Luxembourg for this occasion. Other high-ranking military and political personalities from both countries and representatives from Italy were also present. Once again, Prince Félix was among the distinguished guests.⁵⁹¹

Different newspapers covered all the events surrounding the inauguration, with *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise* even publishing a special edition, its title speaking of an unforgettable day of Franco-Belgian-Luxembourgish friendship.⁵⁹² Although Belgian delegates were present, with speeches stressing how Luxembourgish volunteers had fought and died under the flags of France and Belgium, and expressing the bond between these three countries, the inauguration just as the memorial itself predominantly focused on Luxembourg and France.⁵⁹³

Nothing of the mausoleum has any visible, tangible, or figurative association to Belgium, unlike the *Monument du Souvenir* with its engraved message by Belgian General Gillain. An article from May 1923 published by *Le Journal de Bruxelles* pointed out that the organisation committee behind this memorial, which appealed to the generosity of the Luxembourgish people and other allied nationals living in Luxembourg, therefore also Belgians, does not include any

⁵⁹⁰ Kolnberger, T. and Kmec, S. (2022), p. 321.

⁵⁹¹ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 321/322. Edition de midi (16.11.1924), p. 1; *Luxemburger Wort*, 77. Jg., n° 322 (17.11.1924), p. 2.

⁵⁹² Interestingly but not surprising, this special edition was issued by the only national newspaper in the French language at the time.

⁵⁹³ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 321/322. Edition de midi (16.11.1924), p. 1.

Belgians. In the minds of the organisers, the construction of the mausoleum should therefore retain an exclusively Franco-Luxembourgish character, according to *Le Journal de Bruxelles*.⁵⁹⁴ Nevertheless, including Belgium in this event must have been deemed essential to further cement the union between these three neighbours and Luxembourg's post-war narrative of being one of the Allies.

Apart from politics, the memorial and its inauguration were also marked by economic proportions. After Luxembourg had left the *Zollverein* and together with Belgium formed the *Union économique belgo-luxembourgeoise*, with its steel industry also breaking away from Germany, for example HADIR (*Hauts-fourneaux et aciéries de Differdange, St-Ingbert, Rumelange*) taking over the *Deutsch-Luxemburgische Bergwerks- und Hütten-AG*, the construction of the mausoleum sought to unite the three allies. Together they promoted the idea of a common economic strategy and a unified market against Germany. This also explains the presence of members of the Chamber of Commerce and several important figures from the steel industry among the guests. This economic dimension is also evident through the initiator of the mausoleum and president of the Luxembourgish division of *Le Souvenir Français*: French naval engineer Gabriel Maugas, former advisor of Maréchal Foch during WWI and later director of HADIR.⁵⁹⁵

The transnational dimensions of this war memorial, in particular Franco-Luxembourgish, were further emphasised through the different speeches given on that day. Stressing the provenance of the French soldiers engraved on the individual marble plaques, including Paris, Lorraine, Brittany, Burgundy, Provence and even Gascony, Maugas painted the picture of all of France forever standing guard around the Luxembourgish hero. Moreover, he accentuated that they could not have accomplished this project without the immense generous support of the Luxembourgish people, hence making the memorial almost entirely Luxembourgish. He also reminded everyone present of the Grand Duchess' patronage and entrusted the care of the memorial, a simple yet enduring symbol of these two countries' bond, to the municipality of the capital

⁵⁹⁴ ET-DH-015.

⁵⁹⁵ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 188; Philippart, R. (2014), pp. 6-7.

and the people of Luxembourg. Despite its attribution as a Luxembourgish memorial in this speech, the transnational character remains evident, further underlined by the mausoleum being unveiled to the sounds of *La Marseillaise*.⁵⁹⁶

In a subsequent speech, the president of *L'Union Nationale des Combattants de la Moselle* paid tribute to all those who died in the name of France. He referred to Pascal Bonetti's poem "*Le volontaire étranger de 1914*", expressing honour and salute to all those whom the poet baptised as "*fils de France non par le sang reçu mais par le sang versé*" (sons of France, not by blood received, but by blood shed). The mayor of Luxembourg City spoke of France and Luxembourg's solidarity in death acquiring the value of a delicate and touching symbol and how the volunteers felt the chivalrous spirit of John the Blind rising within them.⁵⁹⁷ This allusion and association with John the Blind were thus used in a similar fashion to the previously mentioned commemorative medal *Médaille des Volontaires Luxembourgeois de la Grande Guerre de 1914-1918* (Chapter 4) to further testify the enduring relationship to France; simultaneously, the Luxembourgish *légionnaires* acquired an almost myth-like status, as also underlined by Arnaud Sauer.⁵⁹⁸

In all, the transnational character, with emphasis on the eternal fraternity between Luxembourg and France personified through the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre* visually enveloping the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu*, is clearly confirmed through the entirety of the inaugural event from 1924. As summarised by Kolnberger and Kmec, in the context of heightened nationalisation, but also the post-war narrative, the unknown Luxembourgish soldier and all the other *légionnaires* not only embody Luxembourg's contribution to the Allied cause, but in the same vein overwrite the memory of German occupation and the Allies' accusations of collaboration during WWI.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 321/322. Edition de midi (16.11.1924), p. 1; *Luxemburger Wort*, 77. Jg., n° 322 (17.11.1924), p. 2.

⁵⁹⁷ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 321/322. Edition de midi (16.11.1924), p. 1.

⁵⁹⁸ Sauer, A. (2014), p. 159.

⁵⁹⁹ Kolnberger, T. and Kmec, S. (2022), pp. 325-326.

7.11 Evolution over time

Despite never really turning into a national pilgrimage or memorial site like the *Monument du Souvenir*, the French mausoleum and tomb featured in numerous annual commemorative events over its hundred-year long history. Continuing with the *Toussaint* tradition, the war memorial at the *Cimetière Notre Dame* was henceforth part of the official commemorative events of that day to remember the dead. Newspaper articles from 1925 and 1926 for example noted how *Le Souvenir Français* had invited French and Francophile societies to bow before the mausoleum and pay tribute to the war dead like in previous years. The ceremonies are described as solemn and moving, with various societies, French and Belgian officers and delegates, the mayor of Luxembourg City, the prime minister and other officials present. Wreaths and garlands were laid down and once again the Luxembourgish, Belgian and French national anthems were played, in tradition with its transnational character.⁶⁰⁰

Throughout the years, newspapers kept reporting of similar ceremonies for *Toussaint*, with separate remembrance events occurring for the 11th November in later years, as also observed at the *Monument du Souvenir*. Visits to the mausoleum further occurred on 14th July to celebrate France's national holiday. Likewise, commemorative events to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Verdun were held at the memorial, such as for the 60th anniversary in February 1976 to honour the courageous combatants and defenders of Verdun, among them 3,000 Luxembourgers as printed in the newspapers - a clear exaggeration but in line with the post-war narrative. Following the appeal by *Le Souvenir Français* and *Amicale des Anciens Légionnaires et Volontaires Luxembourgeois*, the event was attended by a large crowd among them members from associations linked to WWII.⁶⁰¹

The attendance of WWII organisations at an anniversary event for a WWI battle indicates the general merging of WWI and WWII commemorations as also observed elsewhere in Luxembourg and abroad. And just like the *Monument du Souvenir*, the mausoleum and tomb also extended their initial purpose and

⁶⁰⁰ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 55. Jg., n° 305/306. Edition de midi (01.11.1925), p. 3; *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 56. Jg., n° 305/306 (01.11.1926), p. 2.

⁶⁰¹ *Luxemburger Wort*, 129. Jg., n° 45 (23.02.1976), p. 5.

function as a WWI memorial. Consequently, the memorial was integrated into the *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale* on 10th October⁶⁰² and the *Journée Commémorative de la Libération et de l'Armistice* on 8th May.⁶⁰³ As reported in *Luxemburger Wort* in 1971, the latter memorial day marking the end of WWII remembered the fallen of both world wars with flowers laid down at the now so-called *Mausolée du Soldat Inconnu*, with another visit occurring in 1975 to mark the 30th anniversary of the Nazi capitulation.⁶⁰⁴

The argument of having the word *soldat* rather than *légionnaire* on the tomb's epitaph can be revisited at this point. Still often referred to in the press and elsewhere as *Mausolée du Soldat Inconnu*, and by becoming part of WWII and other national commemorative events, the namelessness of the tomb without the clear association and distinction of *légionnaire* would allow for this tomb to be truly seen as the placeholder for all those missing, unclaimed, or unidentified irrespective of which army, regiment, side, or conflict they fought in.

From the examples mentioned above, it is evident that the French mausoleum and tomb of the unknown Luxembourgish *légionnaire* held a significant place in the commemorative calendar in Luxembourg throughout most of the twentieth century. A shift can however be observed in recent decades. When looking at the official programme on the government's website for the *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale* for 2000, 2010, 2022 and 2023 respectively, it included ceremonies and wreath laying at different memorials throughout the city: the *Monument National de la Solidarité Luxembourgeoise* (*Kanounenhiwwel*), the 2018 inaugurated *Monument à la Mémoire des Victimes de la Shoah* (*Kaddish*), the *Monument du Souvenir* (*Gëlle Fra*), the *Mémorial de la Déportation à Luxembourg-Hollerich*, as well as the *Monument National de la Résistance et de la Déportation* (*Hinzerter Kräiz*). No mention is made of the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre* or the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu*.⁶⁰⁵ The reasons as to why the mausoleum and tomb are now evidently excluded from the *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale* can only be speculated upon. Nevertheless, what is certain is that the status and

⁶⁰² *Luxemburger Wort*, 113. Jg., n° 284 (10.10.1960), p. 3.

⁶⁰³ *Luxemburger Wort*, 124. Jg., n° 130 (10.05.1971), p. 4.

⁶⁰⁴ *Luxemburger Wort*, 128. Jg., n° 106 (09.05.1975), p. 6.

⁶⁰⁵ See for example for 2023: Le gouvernement luxembourgeois (2023) *Journée de commémoration nationale*.

significance of this WWI memorial has declined in recent decades and is nowadays not considered as a national monument.

This does not mean that no commemorative events took place at the mausoleum in recent years; a small memorial service on 11th November is still held at the mausoleum, although a certain French undertone remains. For example, on 11th November 2021, a small ceremony was held at the mausoleum attended by representatives of the French Embassy, French veterans' associations, the *Association des Anciens combattants et des Soldats de la paix au Luxembourg* and the president of *Le Souvenir Français*, but also alderwoman of the City of Luxembourg. Pupils from secondary schools, among them *Lycée Vauban* - a French school in the capital - read out letters from both French and German combatants, thereby adding a bit more of a trans-European note to an otherwise rather French event. The ceremony concluded with an additional visit to the *Gëlle Fra*.⁶⁰⁶

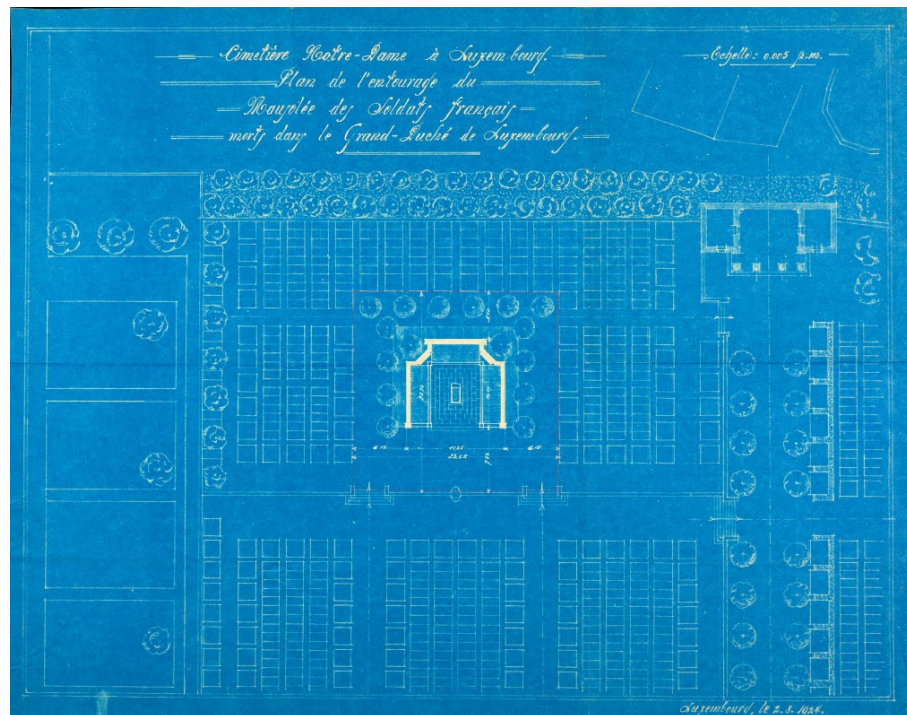


Figure 7-8 Situation plan of the Cimetière Notre Dame with mausoleum in the middle, 1924
Source: Archives de la Ville de Luxembourg

⁶⁰⁶ L' Ambassade de France au Luxembourg (2021) *Commémoration du 11 novembre à Luxembourg*.



Figure 7-9 Situation plan of the Cimetière Notre Dame showing expansion towards the back, 1945
Source: Archives de la Ville de Luxembourg

Despite this turn in stature and importance, at least on a national level, the memorial itself did not undergo any significant alterations. Nothing has seemingly been added or removed, nor has the memorial been relocated. The only visible changes to the memorial site are the vegetation and the extension of the cemetery around it. While the outer cemetery wall with houses behind it still existed and was clearly visible in a photograph and a situation plan from the 1920s (see Figure 7-7 and Figure 7-8 respectively), the cemetery has since then been extended with rows of graves enveloping the memorial to its back and sides, as evident from a situation plan of the cemetery from 1945 (Figure 7-9). A more detailed account of the memorial and its surroundings in its current state will be discussed below when analysing the results from the phenomenological survey.

7.12 Phenomenological survey results

Located immediately north of the city centre (see Appendix 2), I have frequented Limpertsberg countless times, with also *Parking Glacis* repurposed each summer for Luxembourg's annual funfair *Schueberfouer* situated within this neighbourhood. Despite being familiar with this area, I have no recollection of either seeing or hearing about the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre* let alone the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu* prior to this research. Therefore, when carrying out fieldwork, it was the first time encountering this remarkable memorial.

Knowing that the memorial is located at the back of the *Cimetière Notre Dame*, I started my approach coming from one of the front gates of the cemetery. The front gates are located along the street which since recently has been converted into the new tram route running through the capital, with a tram stop (*Faiencerie*) immediately in front of the cemetery, making the cemetery and by extension the mausoleum easily accessible. This is also the street bearing the name *Allée des Résistants et des Déportés*, with *Allée de l'Union* running perpendicular to it. Together with the different aforementioned memorials, they create one of those so-called imaginary encounters, like other street names and memorials discussed in Chapter 5. Even though the mausoleum is located further away from this intersection of different memorials and commemorative street names recounting a narrative of resistance, there is still a degree of spatial connection between WWI and WWII simply by their proximity. Nevertheless, WWII undoubtedly still takes centre stage.

As I entered the cemetery, I checked for any signposts hoping to find a sign similar to those to indicate Commonwealth war graves at various cemeteries, but despite the mausoleum being the final resting place for 56 French soldiers, no such signpost could be found. Nevertheless, there was a signpost for the *Hinzerter Kräiz* informing visitors that this memorial is located at the third gate, again indicative of this WWII memorial's importance and standing. Due to its large size, the whole of cemetery cannot be seen from any of the entrances. With the mausoleum tucked away at the back of the cemetery, it therefore seems almost impossible to see it by chance just by walking by. This is in stark

contrast to the *Hinserter Kräiz*, which can partially be seen from street level when passing that third gate, the one closest to *Stäreplaz (Place de l'Étoile)*.

Moving towards the rear of the cemetery, passing several well-kept gravestones of affluent Luxembourgish families, I had to cross nearly the entire grounds before the mausoleum came into view to my left. The numerous trees contributed to a lush, leafy atmosphere, but they also significantly obstructed visibility (Figure 7-10). This would of course be very different when visiting the cemetery during winter.



Figure 7-10 View of mausoleum covered by trees, approaching from main entrance, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

The mausoleum was at first glance very imposing (Figure 7-11). Having only seen a few photographs before my visit to the cemetery, I was surprised by its sheer size, which again made me wonder how it was possible that I had never heard of this memorial before. The impression I got when actually visiting the mausoleum and experiencing it is something I would not have been able to replicate just by looking at photographs. Situated on a slightly raised section of the cemetery making the mausoleum appear more elevated, pathways lead directly to the only open side of this otherwise rectangular memorial. This allows visitors to stand immediately in front of it with an open and clear view of the main inscription,

the individual marble plaques, and the tomb in its centre. Two steps leading up to the central platform evoke a sense of being invited to come closer, approach the tomb and read the names of the 56 French soldiers. Only by taking those two steps and approaching the tomb does the epitaph “*Ici repose un légionnaire luxembourgeois inconnu*” become more visible. Therefore, if people were only to pass the mausoleum, which itself cannot be overlooked, and glancing at the large inscription “*Aux soldats français de la Grande Guerre morts dans le Grand-Duché*” they would know that this is a mausoleum for French Soldiers, but not necessarily that the tomb is for the unknown Luxembourgish soldier, as the inscription is not visible due to its horizontal positioning (Figure 7-1).



Figure 7-11 Side view of mausoleum, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

The mausoleum and the tomb were in pristine condition with trimmed hedges and tidily arranged and beautiful flowerbeds suggesting regular maintenance, most likely by the groundskeeper of the cemetery. The individual plaques bearing the names of the French soldiers, their origin, and their birth and death dates have been well preserved and are easily legible. There were, however, no indications that the mausoleum has been visited by family members of these French soldiers. This is perhaps not surprising considering that many of the

French soldiers buried at the mausoleum are said to have had no relatives to claim them after the war. Likewise, the tomb of the unknown soldier did not show signs of regular visits, lacking any additional wreaths or flower garlands. This might look very different on commemorative days.

Naturally, the passage of time and exposure to the weather have left some clear visible blemishes. The top of the memorial had a darker discolouring and there were green strains underneath the different ornamental pieces such as the swords on either side of the memorial (Figure 7-12). As these decorative elements are made of bronze, which contains copper, corrosion is a natural consequence over time. The tiles of the paved area around the tomb were also uneven in terms of colours, which suggests that some tiles needed to be replaced after being damaged.



Figure 7-12 Mausoleum seen from left, with building in background, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

Facing the memorial were two benches along the balcony-like wall allowing visitors to take a rest, marvel at the structure, and reflect on what is in front of them. Though the benches are presumably a much later addition to this space, visitors can directly engage with the memorial as it takes up the whole view when seated on the benches, with nothing blocking the view. The mausoleum was nicely framed by trees and other greeneries creating a pleasant atmosphere.

The positioning of the memorial and with pathways on either side make it possible to completely walk around it. While this was still a fairly open and empty space during the time of the memorial's construction (Figure 7-6 and Figure 7-7), this area was intended to function as an extension of the cemetery and saw the addition of many graves around the memorial over time. Rather than being at the outskirts of the cemetery as it was in the 1920s, with the outer wall immediately behind the mausoleum still under construction as seen in Figure 7-7, the cemetery with its neatly kept rows of individual graves thus continued to grow around the mausoleum. The only feature that remained is the building next to the mausoleum (compare Figure 7-7 and Figure 7-12).

Moving further away and back down to the lower section of the cemetery, and facing the memorial anew, this perspective reinforced its slight elevation, beautifully framed by the greenery. At the same time, the memorial was partially blocked by the balcony-like lopsided wall and column in the middle (Figure 7-13). Moving even further away, almost as if approaching from the *Hinzerter Kräiz*, the mausoleum was once again not clearly visible despite its large size, also because of several trees partially blocking the view from this perspective (Figure 7-14). Again, this would be very different during winter.

It is therefore only possible to fully view the mausoleum without any obstruction at a closer distance, as it would be during commemorative events, the guests standing either in front of the mausoleum or even perhaps on the platform next to the tomb. However, standing too close to the mausoleum has the drawback that it is difficult to capture the whole memorial on camera with a standard lens, as was the case during my fieldwork. A wide-angle lens would be required for this when directly facing the memorial.



Figure 7-13 View of mausoleum as seen from the lower section, August 2021
© Laura Zenner



Figure 7-14 View of mausoleum, approaching from direction of Hinzerter Kräiz, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

While undertaking the phenomenological survey at the *Cimetière Notre Dame*, I could hear the cacophony of high-adrenalin amusement rides and cheers of people coming from the nearby *Schueberfouer*. Founded by John the Blind as a market dating back to 1340, the *Schueberfouer* is one of the biggest and oldest funfairs in Europe. Initially situated at *Plateau du St Esprit*, the *Schueberfouer* has been located at Limpertsberg for centuries before taking up permanent residency at *Parking Glacis* since the late nineteenth century. The *Schueberfouer* therefore long predates the memorial and has always been an audible influence from late August to early September each year when the funfair is in full swing. Even though the funfair has been a constant during the lifespan of the mausoleum, its modernisation, and the addition of higher and faster rides since the latter half of the twentieth century consequently led to the augmented noise that can be experienced nowadays. As the fieldwork was carried out in summer 2021, the *Schueberfouer* was not even at its full size due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions at that time. Accordingly, it can be assumed that except for summer 2020 (when the *Schueberfouer* was completely cancelled) the noise level during any other summer is even higher than what I experienced in 2021. This also means that visiting the mausoleum during any other time during the year would certainly produce very different observations, at least from an auditory perspective.

Apart from the protruding noise of the *Schueberfouer*, other audible factors that I noticed while visiting the memorial were the distant sounds of traffic of a busy city, which evidently has changed considerably since the memorial was erected in the 1920s. Located towards the back and thus further away from the street noise, the memorial's location might allow for a quieter and more serene experience (outside the duration of the *Schueberfouer*) than were it situated at the front like the *Hinzerter Kräiz*. Yet as noted above, it also has as consequence that the mausoleum and tomb can be easily overlooked. Not being visible from the different entrances and without any signposts and having been removed from the official ceremonies of the *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale* in more recent years, it can be assumed that mostly people from various French societies within Luxembourg, people interested in this subject, and those frequenting this section of the cemetery when visiting the graves surrounding the memorial, are the ones fully aware of its existence.

7.13 Chapter summary

The *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre* and the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu* count among the prime war memorials dating from the interwar period that are a testament of the political, cultural, and economic relationship between France and Luxembourg at the time. Even though the mausoleum was born out of the idea to create a dedicated memorial for the French soldiers who died on Luxembourgish soil and who could not be repatriated, thereby separating them from the German soldiers after having been buried side by side during the war, the addition of the tomb of the unknown *légionnaire* adds a whole different dimension to this war memorial. Emphasis needs to be given to the choice of words for the epitaph of the tomb, which not only mirrors the one on the French tomb at the *Arc de Triomphe*, but also clearly accentuates that through the *légionnaires* Luxembourg contributed to the cause of the Allies. The *légionnaires* are thus forever literally and figuratively united with their French allies. Yet, choosing the word *légionnaire* ultimately the consequence is that all those in other armies, or from later conflicts, are effectively excluded, which differs greatly to other countries' tomb of the unknown soldier. It can thus be theorised that if the tomb had the word *soldat*, the mausoleum might still be part of the wider ceremonies held on *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale*.

The mausoleum and tomb did not undergo any obvious changes and were not subjected to relocations or destruction as other WWI memorials in Luxembourg. In that sense, its biography appears less eventful. Considering that this mausoleum oozes pro-French sentiments it is surprising that it did not fall victim to the Nazis. No records could be found indicating any plans for a demolition, which does not mean it might not have been considered at some point. However, given the fact that the mausoleum serves as a grave, this might have saved it from destruction. On the other side, it can be argued that despite being a strong symbol of the link between France and Luxembourg, it does not convey the same message as the *Gëlle Fra*, namely that of freedom, identity, and independence. The idea of Luxembourg being a free and independent nation with its own national identity must have been a greater motivation for the Nazis to destroy the *Gëlle Fra* and to facilitate Luxembourg's integration into the Third Reich.

Chapter 8 Local memorialisation of the air raids

8.1 Introduction

The following chapter focuses on the memorialisation of the victims killed during the air raids on Luxembourg carried out by the Allies. During this research, only two local WWI memorials could be identified that centralise the commemoration of civilian victims of their respective communities: Clausen-Neudorf and Hollerich-Bonnevoie, quarters within Luxembourg City (see Appendix 2). Even though different localities in the former industrial south also fell victim to aerial bombardment, resulting in casualties, no other memorial dedicated to these victims could be identified during my research. Moreover, as noted elsewhere, no national communal memorial exists to commemorate all civilian victims of WWI.

The *Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf* (Figure 8-1) situated in Clausen, an old neighbourhood within Luxembourg City, remembers the ten civilians killed on 8th July 1918 during an aerial attack carried out by British RAF airplanes. As a local memorial constructed during the interwar period, it carries a strong civic and personal connotation.

Secondary sources rarely mention this war memorial in Clausen apart from its existence, its general location and what it commemorates, often only dedicating a couple of paragraphs to it. A noteworthy exception is a three-page article by Léon Blasen from 1985, serving as one of the main sources for this memorial. While several old newspaper articles about its inauguration exist, only very few newspaper articles about its continued use and commemorative events over time could be found. Consequently, it remains unknown how and to what degree this monument was used during the past century and to what extent such activities were covered in the press. Nevertheless, the collected data, including photographs, archival documents, and the findings from the phenomenological survey, combine to compose an insightful yet fragmented life-story of this war memorial.

The WWI memorial in Bonnevoie, nowadays officially referred to as *Monument aux Morts des deux guerres* (Figure 8-9), embodies the same strong civic and personal undertones as the one in Clausen. This memorial is, however, quite unique as it serves a dual function since its creation. It commemorates civilian victims killed during air raids on Bonnevoie and neighbouring Hollerich, both close to Luxembourg City's main train station, as well as the fallen *légionnaires* native to these two quarters of the capital. No other identified WWI memorial in Luxembourg creates this direct link between civilians and soldiers.

Since 1957 the memorial even serves a triple function after a separate adjacent memorial for the victims of WWII was added, thereby becoming part of a dedicated memorial space for both conflicts at a new location. Henceforth, the original WWI memorial and its meaning were altered as further visualised by a supplemental large plaque marking the memorial space with the words "*À Nos Morts - Victimes Des Deux Guerres - 1914-1918 - 1939-1940*" (To Our Dead - Victims of the Two Wars).

In terms of secondary literature, just as with most Luxembourgish WWI memorials, the information provided is basic and elementary, covering elements such as concept and inauguration, but missing any in-depth research, analysis, or evaluation, in particular in regard to its relocation. Nevertheless, the primary sources, including newspaper articles, photographs, letters and even a situation plan of the cemetery where the memorial is located, coupled with my own observations recorded during the fieldwork, allow the assembly of a clear biography of this memorial over the past century; however, with the occasional gaps in-between.

8.2 Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf



Figure 8-1 Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

8.2.1 From inception to realisation

The earliest written sources found during this research mentioning the intention to create a local and civilian war memorial for the ten victims of 8th July 1918 date from late 1922, and with door-to-door collections planned to finance the monument. A newspaper report declared that fellow citizens would not fail to welcome the collectors and support the efforts of the organising committee given the patriotic nature of the memorial.⁶⁰⁷ In addition, newspaper articles from late 1923 reported that a special lottery was set up by the organising

⁶⁰⁷ *L'indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 52. Jg., n° 349 (15.12.1922), p. 1.

committee, combined with the sale of small flags and illustrated postcards in 1924 to collect additional funds.⁶⁰⁸ Said committee mainly consisted of residents from Clausen and Neudorf, making the construction of this monument a community initiative.⁶⁰⁹

Regarding the choice of location, the little square or intersection where *Rue de Clausen* and *Rue Malakoff* meet next to the old archway known as *Porte Mansfeld* was chosen, an area also known as *Tiergarten* or *Déieregart* among locals. It was at this spot, where seven of the ten victims were fatally injured by the shrapnel of a single bomb.⁶¹⁰ Nevertheless, there were some concerns and comments about this place being favourable for a large monument. Archival records note that the city's engineer considered the little square as hardly ideal for the envisioned type of memorial because in terms of architecture and circulation the square was nothing more than a widening of the street. Instead, it was proposed to keep the memorial simpler and modest such as a plaque or small funerary monument.⁶¹¹

Although no archival sources or newspapers were found that elaborate on this decision-making process, it can be deduced that the idea of a simple plaque was not welcomed by the locals and the committee, and that no other alternative sites were proposed or considered given the *Déieregart's* direct connection to the event. This makes the monument in Clausen the only known WWI memorial in Luxembourg that creates this explicit spatial and symbolic link between the historical and tragic event and its memorial space, giving it a deeper personal meaning.

Crafted by stonemasonry company Jacquemart according to the plans by former teacher and artist Jean Curot, the design of the monument is described as very simple in most sources. The 3 m high granite memorial consists of quadrangular pedestal surmounted by a column, and topped with a sphere, which according to Léon Blasen, symbolises a bomb.⁶¹² The top part of the column is adorned on

⁶⁰⁸ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 53. Jg., n° 283. Edition de 15 h. (10.10.1923), p. 2; *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 110. Edition de 18 h. (19.04.1924), p. 3.

⁶⁰⁹ AE-01347.

⁶¹⁰ Blasen, L. (1985c), p. 35.

⁶¹¹ LU 03.5:32.

⁶¹² Blasen, L. (1985c), p. 38.

each side by a floral wreath or garland as well as a cross. The lower part of the column features twelve small individual panels on which the names and date of birth of the ten victims are inscribed. The two additional panels bear information by whom it was erected (the population of Clausen, Neudorf, and vicinities) and the inauguration date. Below those panels, on the main side of the pedestal facing the city centre, the inscription reads “*A la Mémoire des Victimes du Bombardement par Avions du 8 Juillet 1918*” (In Memory of the Victims of the Bombardment by Airplanes on 8th July 1918). Interestingly, no acknowledgment is made by whom the attacks were carried out, and as will be discussed below, this was most likely on purpose, to fit into the post-war narrative.

8.2.2 From inauguration to the centenary of the attack

The provisional consecration of the memorial was planned for 8th July 1923, coinciding with the fifth anniversary of the air raid.⁶¹³ Initially planned for spring 1924⁶¹⁴, the official inauguration eventually took place on 3rd August 1924, attended by French, Belgian and Italian representatives, members of the committee, municipal authorities as well as the parents of the victims. Neither German nor British representatives were present on this day. Like the inscription on the monument, the speeches refrain from making any mention that the air raids were carried out by the British RAF, simply referring to them euphemistically as “birds of death”.⁶¹⁵ Gaston Diderich, mayor of Luxembourg City, spoke of the tragedy as a “blind and stupid happenstance which had slyly and needlessly killed those poor defenceless beings in their peaceful homes.”⁶¹⁶

This omission of the Allies’ involvement is also mirrored in the newspaper reports about the inauguration, with one article calling it “a catastrophe drawn to the country by the presence of the German invaders.”⁶¹⁷ This clearly shifts the sole blame of these attacks onto Germany rather than also acknowledging the

⁶¹³ AE-01347.

⁶¹⁴ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 53. Jg., n° 283. Edition de 15 h. (10.10.1923), p. 2.

⁶¹⁵ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 216/217. Edition de midi (03.08.1924), p. 1.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[Own translation]

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[Own translation]

actions of Luxembourg's claimed allies, the country's ambiguous neutrality and difficult geographical strategic position during the war.

A later article from 1937 still does not mention the Allies by name but the phrasing has slightly changed by referring to the attack as “when a number of airmen, of whom we cannot even say that they were hostile, dropped their fatal bombs on the quiet suburb.”⁶¹⁸ For most of the past century, subsequent references to the aerial attacks also tend to eschew the fact that the attacks were carried out by the British, thereby further feeding into and supporting the narrative of Luxembourg as one of the Allies. From the data collected about the memorial, only Blasen's article from 1985 clearly states that this was an “English air raid”, although without going into further analysis as to why this was omitted from the memorial's inscription.

Despite this mention by Blasen, the general exclusion in most sources from the interbellum onwards, combined with the simplified inscription on the memorial, has the consequence that later generations might not be fully aware of the complete story behind these attacks. In an interview with *Luxemburger Wort* in November 2018, Denis Scuto, who even questioned how many people are aware of the existence of this memorial or its meaning, drew attention to this omission on the memorial's inscription which make it appear as if these bombs had no originator. According to Scuto, this choice of words on the memorial was rather deliberate.⁶¹⁹ The monument in Clausen is therefore a prime example of how the omission of certain historical facts can help to propagate an altered and more convenient version of events. This lack of attribution of the British RAF has also interestingly been remarked by then British Ambassador to Luxembourg John Marshall in a short article in 2019 about the centenary of the attack a year prior. Perhaps even more surprising is that it was also the British Embassy in Luxembourg that organised a small ceremony led by Reverend Geoff Read of the Anglican Church of Luxembourg for the centenary of the fatal attack on 8th July in 2018.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁸ *Luxemburger Wort*, 90. Jg., n° 205/206 (24.07.1937), p. 3.

[Own translation]

⁶¹⁹ See interview videos with Denis Scuto: Fick, M. (2018) «La Première Guerre mondiale est traitée comme une petite guerre» au Luxembourg. *Virgule*, 8 November.

⁶²⁰ Marshall, J. (2019) Allied bombs on Luxembourg soil. *RTL*, 12 July.

Apart from this recent event to mark the centenary of the attack, sources about the monument's continued use over time are generally scarce, with only a handful of newspaper articles referring to the monument during remembrance events, in particular on *Toussaint*. An article from 1973 on the official commemorative ceremonies for the victims of both world wars reported how, like in previous years, flowers were laid down at the *Fliegerdenkmal* (aviation memorial) in Clausen on 1st November.⁶²¹ It can thus be concluded that if not on the 11th November or the anniversary of the attack on 8th July, tribute was paid to the victims at least during *Toussaint*.

With regard to alterations to the memorial or surroundings, Blasen only made a short reference to the memorial space changing slightly over time with the addition of a small green space with some plants enclosed by a low wrought iron fence, yet without indicating a specific date for this change. Additionally, Blasen pointed out how the memorial is now basically located beside a car park; however, he did not comment on how this shapes the experience and impression of the memorial site.⁶²² Despite the shortage of detailed secondary literature to expand the monument's biography and to assess further modifications to the memorial itself or its surroundings, a series of photographs coupled with additional archival documents and the results from the phenomenological fieldwork open up further chapters of its life-story.

8.2.3 Evolution over time

A number of older photographs of the *Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf* at different stages allow for glimpses into its past and its evolution over time. Apart from a photograph of the inauguration event, two additional photographs from the 1930s and 1960s will be discussed below to highlight the gradual changes. Moreover, various photographs from different angles were taken during my own fieldwork in 2021. Besides being able to add a recent photograph to the inventory of WWI memorials in Luxembourg (Appendix 1), these contemporary photographs demonstrate how varying perspectives can influence an observer's perception and experience of a war memorial. This in

⁶²¹ *Luxemburger Wort*, 126. Jg., n° 252 (02.11.1973), p. 9.

⁶²² Blasen, L. (1985c), p. 38.

turn allows to contrast the current state of the memorial, its surroundings and impact thereof to that of the 1920s (Figure 8-2), 1930s (Figure 8-3) and 1960s (Figure 8-5).

The photographs from the interwar period (Figure 8-2 and Figure 8-3) present the monument as seen from across the main street, *Rue de Clausen*, with the archway *Porte Mansfeld* in the background. As evident on the photographs, this monument has a much more urban setting than some other WWI memorials in Luxembourg situated at cemeteries. The monument is immediately adjacent to the main street and set in a small open square surrounded on two sides by residential buildings thereby integrating itself directly into the residents' daily life. This can even be seen during the inauguration event. While the official ceremony was taking place in the little square, Figure 8-2 shows people simply leaning out of their homes' windows to observe the event.



Figure 8-2 Inauguration event of monument in 1924
Source: izi.TRAVEL

The presence of the youth in Figure 8-3 further suggests that the memorial merged into its urban setting and the locals' everyday lives. It is not known who these people in the photograph are; whether they are relatives of the victims, residents of the surrounding houses posing for the photograph, or whether the monument became a meeting point for the youth of Clausen and neighbouring Neudorf. Whichever the case, the youth sitting or leaning against the fence,

another boy passing by with his bicycle, and the small store (*Épicerie*) next to *Porte Mansfeld*, all hint at an active urban environment of which the memorial is now an integral part.



Figure 8-3 Monument with youth circa 1930s
Unknown artist © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg

Comparing the photograph from 1924 to the one taken in the 1930s, one immediate modification to the memorial becomes apparent, already mentioned by Blasen: the low wrought iron fence on which the group of youth is sitting. Archival documents reveal that the installation of the iron fence was proposed in early 1925 with the main purpose to protect the memorial from depredation by children.⁶²³ One might speculate how effective this addition was considering that the youth are now simply sitting on the low fence.

Below, Figure 8-4 shows how the memorial space appeared in 2021 during my fieldwork. Compared to Figure 8-3, the differences are quite striking. In the 1930s the square seems open and relatively void of other features with the monument taking centre stage and being the main eye-catcher as nothing obscures or distracts from it. In 2021, however, most of the space is occupied by trees and cars, two elements to be discussed in detail below. These changes to

⁶²³ LU 03.5:32.

the war memorial and its surroundings are a stark reminder of the ever-evolving nature of cityscapes, with almost nothing staying static and consequently resulting in alternating perceptions of a place and the structures therein. This is also true when contrasting photographs of the monument taken from a different angle.



Figure 8-4 View of the monument at Déieregaard, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

The next set of photographs (Figure 8-5 and Figure 8-6) depict the monument as seen from *Rue Malakoff* standing underneath the *Porte Mansfeld*. To the right side of the photograph taken in the 1960s (Figure 8-5), a parked car is clearly visible. Similarly, the photograph taken in 2021 (Figure 8-6), again shows cars parked next to the memorial. It is unlikely that this space was initially designed as a car park, considering the few numbers of vehicles in the interwar period and the clear absence of them in the 1930s photograph. This was therefore a development that occurred gradually resulting from the advancement of modernisation and urbanisation. This is comparable to the car park around the *Monument du Souvenir* at the *Place de la Constitution*. Both examples accurately illustrate how the immediate urban surroundings can drastically alter over time even though that space was not initially created or designed for such purpose.



Figure 8-5 View of monument as seen from Porte Mansfeld circa 1960s
Pol Aschman © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg



Figure 8-6 View of monument as seen from Porte Mansfeld, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

Contrasting the different photographs over the span of almost hundred years highlight arguably the biggest visual change to the memorial space: the planting of two trees as visible in the more recent photographs. Pinpointing the date and the reasoning behind the plantation of these trees initially proved difficult to find and required further archival research, and although the explanation for the addition of trees seemed logical and relevant at the time, it also entails direct consequences to the war memorial to be examined in section 8.2.4.

In September 1980, the *Comité du Syndicat d'Intérêts locaux de Luxembourg-Clausen* together with the inhabitants of Clausen raised a complaint regarding the poor execution of the planting of trees and rosebushes three years prior. The main issue was the provisional border around the trees and rosebushes which should be replaced with a permanent fixture with the roses removed due to repeated destruction of them since they were planted. It was deemed important that this permanent construction should adapt perfectly to the memorial which was regarded as being of certain historical value.⁶²⁴

As for the reasoning behind the tree planting, this letter of complaint from 1980 indicates that this was done to prevent cars from parking immediately in front of the memorial, given the adjacent small car park. A response from the mayor in 1981 regarding this complaint informs of the eventual replacement of the temporary border by a row of granite stones cut to size, the paving of the square with good quality paving stones, and the removal of the rosebushes but the conservation of the two trees.⁶²⁵ Interestingly, the planting of the trees was therefore purely a countermeasure against the parking of cars rather than an active step to change or enhance the memorial space itself. Further, there seems to have been no attempt to have the car park removed instead and to make this a no-parking area, returning the square to its interbellum state. But given the lack of parking options in Clausen, and indeed in many parts of the capital, the car park was apparently deemed essential. This must have been the best option to achieve both results: preventing cars from parking directly in front of the memorial while keeping the car park. After the installation of the permanent border around the trees, the only additional change made directly to

⁶²⁴ LU 11 IV/5:15717.

⁶²⁵ LU 11 IV/5:15717.

the memorial space was the planting of hedges post 1981, which is how the memorial space still appears today (as seen in summer 2021). Though no sources could be found about these hedges, it can be assumed that this was another countermeasure to possibly prevent people from climbing over or sitting on the iron fence.

The various photographs of the monument in Clausen are a valuable resource to piece together the different chapters of its biography and aid to visualise how the ever-changing landscape, or in this case cityscape, can highly influence a war memorial site. They reveal changes which in turn allow to dig deeper into the archives to find answers as to when and why these occurred, helping to complete the memorial's biography as much as possible. Apart from having contemporary photographs of the state of the memorial and its surroundings at the time of this research, the observations made during the phenomenological survey allow to add yet another layer to this in-depth study and evaluate the implications of the above-mentioned changes.

8.2.4 Phenomenological survey results

The *Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf* features on the interactive map of the digital WWI exhibition, pinpointed correctly at the little square known as *Déieregaart*. The map informs that the monument honours the victims of the Clausen air attack on 8th July 1918, though without providing the exact number of victims or mentioning that the air raid was carried out by British airplanes which aligns with most other references to this monument.

Before starting this research, I was not aware of the existence of this WWI memorial in Clausen though I had probably passed it unknowingly as I had been in Clausen several times during the 20 odd years I lived in Luxembourg. I first visited the site of the monument during a preliminary scouting a year prior to carrying out the phenomenological survey in summer 2021. Nevertheless, the lack of signposts for this monument and being situated slightly outside of what can be considered the centre of Clausen, known for its many bars, pubs, and bustling nightlife, make the memorial not as easy to find as one might expect.

During the fieldwork in 2021, instead of approaching the memorial from the centre of Clausen starting from the river *Alzette* and following *Rue de Clausen*, I chose to approach it coming from Pfaffenthal, having first visited the *Cimetière du Val des Bons Malades* before also visiting the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof* (see Appendix 2). Irrespective of direction of approach, Clausen and its WWI memorial can be reached either by public transport, by car, or on foot, making it an easily accessible memorial.

From the old Prussian military cemetery, which is tucked away from the main roads passing through Clausen, a quiet residential street joins *Rue Malakoff*, a cobbled street leading to *Porte Mansfeld*. This creates a direct symbolic and spatial link between the cemetery and the memorial even though neither is visible from their respective location. Standing underneath the archway *Porte Mansfeld*, I had a perfect view of the monument, with nothing blocking or covering it. From this perspective, the two planted trees are positioned behind the monument, evoking a picturesque scene, bringing the monument to the foreground (see Figure 8-6).

However, this image gets disturbed when taking in the rest of the surroundings. There are many additional changes to the memorial space that do not show on the photograph from the 1960s (Figure 8-5), such as various street signs and a bench. In particular, the presence of bins immediately next to the monument impacts the otherwise green and leafy atmosphere. Simultaneously, the bins, as well as the street signs, are a reminder of the memorial's constantly evolving urban setting. They add to the transformation of the original commemorative and mourning aspect of the memorial site into something rather ordinary and mundane, making the memorial space even more a part of everyday life and thereby losing somewhat in importance and impact in the process.



Figure 8-7 View of monument as seen from across Rue de Clausen, hidden by trees, with car park and terrace visible, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

My perception of the memorial changed as soon as I crossed *Rue de Clausen*. Standing across the street, the memorial was almost completely hidden by the trees, thrown into their shadow, with only the base of the column visible, turning a relatively large monument into an almost overlooked urban feature (Figure 8-7). As a measure to prevent cars from parking right in front of the monument, which in itself would have greatly influenced the memorial site, the trees represent the biggest and most direct recent change to this space. What was once considered a logical solution turned counterproductive when considering the visibility of the memorial. This will continue to have an impact on the memorial and likely even further reduce visibility from this vantage point as the trees will continue to grow. Naturally, my perception of the memorial from this viewpoint would be very different during winter when the leaves have fallen, again demonstrating the subjective and variable nature of phenomenological archaeology that needs to be acknowledged.



Figure 8-8 View of monument partially hidden by car park and trees, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

Apart from the trees, the street signs and information panel listing different historical sites within Clausen - but ironically not the WWI memorial just next to it - were also noticeable from this side of the street. From here, I also had a very clear view onto the small car park immediately next to monument, recalling its urban setting. Staying on that side of street but changing perspective as if coming from the centre of Clausen, the cars took up most of the little square, thereby also drawing in most of the attention, with the memorial peeking out behind the cars and through the branches of the trees (Figure 8-8).

Even though it is possible to completely walk around the memorial, the stationed cars were somewhat of a physical hinderance, as it did not allow to observe the memorial from a normal distance. As the main inscription is facing the car park it is evident that this area was initially not intended to have a car park at this location but was a subsequent consequence of municipal decisions to change this urban landscape to accommodate for the need for parking in Clausen. Without the car park, it would give the whole square a much more open

and inviting feeling and allow to directly approach the memorial coming from the centre of Clausen without cars parked in its way.

Another key element impacting the memorial site was the small terrace of the local pub, *Café Déieregaard*, bordering the car park (see Figure 8-7 and Figure 8-8). This pub has been at this site for a very long time, and it can be assumed that the terrace, set up on the pavement with a few tables and parasols, has also been in operation for many years during the warmer months. Through this, and as observed during the fieldwork in 2021, patrons are sitting right in front of the monument while enjoying beverages and food, with music audible from inside the pub as well as the general commotion and conversations of the patrons. This lively atmosphere greatly influences the traditional meaning behind this memorial space as one of quiet remembrance.

Additional noise distractions came directly from *Rue de Clausen* which is a busy street. While carrying out fieldwork, I could see and hear numerous vehicles driving past. Apart from the street noise, Clausen is also beneath one of the flight paths to the airport less than 10 km away. Low flying airplanes, either preparing for landing or just after take-off, considerably increase the sound intensity, making it one of the 'noisiest' memorial sites studied in this research. Furthermore, this demonstrates how even changes not within the direct proximity of a war memorial can have a crossover effect and thereby have unplanned consequences of how a war memorial is experienced and perceived.

Augmented noise from road or air traffic is certainly nothing that could have been predicted by the monument's initiators in the 1920s. With the airport opening in the 1930s, the constant presence of airplanes flying over a war memorial dedicated to victims of an air raid even bestows this space with a certain dark and satiric undertone. The *Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf* is thus a poignant example that accentuates how both visible and audible changes over time are in most cases inevitable but worth considering when studying the evolution of war memorials and their present-day impact.

The memorial itself wears blemishes and marks from being exposed to the elements and does not appear to have been cleaned in recent years, with the

main column of the monument appearing almost white in older photographs. The inscription and the names of the victims are legible; however, the panel containing information about who erected the memorial was difficult to decipher. The old iron fence is still noticeable but somewhat camouflaged by the low hedges which, however, looked trimmed indicating that the space is being maintained. No wreaths or flowers were laid at the memorial at the time of my visit, giving no indication as to whether the memorial is visited by family members of the victims or not - this might of course be different on commemorative days. It can be assumed that apart from the families of the victims, the locals and those frequenting the pub, that this memorial is largely forgotten as it is far from the centre of Clausen with no signposts informing people of its existence.

8.2.5 Conclusion

The *Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf* presents an excellent example for the correlation between a war memorial and its memorial space. It shows how a war memorial can be highly shaped by its surroundings, but vice-versa, can also ascribe new meaning to the place it is situated in, as already stated by Emma Login.⁶²⁶ Given the decision to erect a memorial in the middle of this square within an urban setting, the memorial itself has changed the context and spirit of this space from the interwar period onwards. As most victims died in the immediate vicinity where the memorial is now situated, it adds another layer to this square and its own life-story. The memorial thus acts as a constant physical and visible reminder of the air raids and victims.

Unfortunately, it is not known what function, if any, this square had before the existence of the monument. Yet, considering how the little square evolved over time, with the car park, street signs and the terrace of the pub, it can be argued that these changes would have happened either way irrespective of the monument's presence. The small square known as *Déieregaart* has been reshaped and remoulded by the historical event and the creation of a memorial space, though over time it appears to have reverted to just another urban square which simply happens to feature a war memorial. Without knowing the

⁶²⁶ Login, E. L. (2014), pp. 46-47.

context, no one would know that this square claimed most of the victims killed by the air attack on 8th July 1918 and therefore explaining the presence of the memorial as any additional information panels stating this connection are missing.

Furthermore, the memorial in Clausen is a great example to showcase how alterations, different vantage points and routes of approach can have a major impact on how people experience and perceive war memorials. Here the trees play an important role in its visibility and what impressions it might evoke from an observer. The tree planting was a very deliberate choice, but all the different consequences were not taken into consideration during the decision-making process. When seen from the archway, it could be argued that the trees might have been planted there deliberately to evoke a certain atmosphere and to offer a more enclosed feeling, cutting it off from the main road. However, from the opposite vantage point the trees significantly reduce the visibility, turning the monument into a semi-hidden, and arguably semi-forgotten, war memorial.

Similarly, the car park has a massive impact on how this memorial space is experienced. Once again, changes were made which comply with the modernisation of urban areas and even though the trees were meant to prevent cars from parking immediately next to the memorial, the existing car park still takes up most of the space in this little square. Considering how much thought went into placing the memorial at the scene of the tragic event, the unstoppable changes that occur in any urban setting over time almost overshadow and nullify these initial efforts.

All in all, despite the reduced visibility depending on viewpoint, the clear integration into everyday urban life and the noise distractions, the placement of this memorial at this little square still holds much validity. It is that connection to the history of this place and the tragedy that happened here on 8th July 1918 which anchors its meaning. Having this monument at any other location, even closer to the centre of Clausen where the WWII memorial is situated - ironically also next to a car park - might improve its visibility and knowledge, but it would take away from its historical and emblematic context and significance.

8.3 Monument aux Morts des deux guerres - Bonnevoie



Figure 8-9 Monument aux Morts des deux guerres - Bonnevoie, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

8.3.1 Concept, construction, and complexity of the memorial

The plan to construct a memorial to the martyrs and heroes of Bonnevoie and Hollerich, as it is engraved on the inscription and referred to in most written sources, first came to life in 1919 when a spontaneously formed committee erected a provisional wooden plaque, bearing all victims' names, at the cemetery of Bonnevoie. An inauguration event of this wooden plaque was held at

the cemetery during which the surviving *légionnaires* of Bonnevoie and Hollerich were further presented with silver watches.⁶²⁷

The cemetery of Bonnevoie was then also chosen for the construction of the permanent monument a few years later, with the public square at a junction in front of the cemetery initially also being considered. Letters from late 1921 and early 1922 inform about the decision-making process regarding the best and most appropriate location for the monument within the cemetery. Eventually the newer part of the cemetery was selected. In these letters, the organising committee put a lot of emphasis on a suitable location, positioning, and decor for best effect. In consequence, and to fit the overall style of the so-called ‘sacred grove’, they requested the planting of trees such as cypresses which would remain green throughout the year.⁶²⁸ Addressing the issue of the high walls enclosing the cemetery for which lower walls with a wrought iron fence would have been favoured, the committee made demands for a third entrance gate closer to the memorial that was later granted by the local authorities. Through the addition of this third entrance gate, it would enable anyone wishing to visit the memorial to gain direct access without detours⁶²⁹, highlighting again the thought and care given to the monument’s placement and setting.

With the necessary funds collected, stonemasonry company Jacquemart, involved in the creation of most WWI memorials in Luxembourg, set out to construct the monument. The result is a 4.6 m high obelisk made from granite from the Vosges region in France.⁶³⁰ Using material from France creates an extra connection between Luxembourg and its neighbour, which does certainly not harm their relationship or the pro-Allies narrative of WWI. While the back explains that the memorial was erected by the population of Hollerich-Bonnevoie, with the upper part of the obelisk being decorated by a floral motif, the front side shows a modest cross adorned by a laurel branch. Below is the inscription “*À nos martyrs et héros de la Grande Guerre 1914-1918*” (To our martyrs and heroes of the Great War 1914-1918) and the letters “*R.I.P.*”. Comparing this inscription to the fact that WWI is nowadays considered ‘la

⁶²⁷ ET-DH-018.

⁶²⁸ LU 03.5:4.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁰ ET-DH-018.

petite guerre' undoubtedly shows the shift in attitude towards this conflict since the interwar period when the Luxembourgish people initially adopted the same title as their French neighbours.

The left side of the obelisk lists the 13 names of the fallen *légionnaires*; the 17 names of civilian victims are on the opposite side. Here, the victims' names are both united but also separated. United, because, as children of these neighbourhoods, they are all victims of the same war. They are all martyrs and heroes, two sides of the same coin, and thereby forge a strong emotional and symbolic connection. In this regard, Sandra Camarda interprets the monument as an attempt to link the history of the civilian victims with that of the *légionnaires*.⁶³¹ Yet, listing the names of the *légionnaires* on one side and the names of the civilians on the opposing side, they are visually and physically separated at the same time. Having the names of the *légionnaires* and the victims of the aerial attacks carried out by the same nation for which the former fought and died engraved on the same monument also mirrors the complexity of Luxembourg's ambiguous neutrality and its narrative of WWI.

This complexity and ambiguity of this memorial, and by extension Luxembourg's participation in WWI and its memorialisation and commemoration thereof, have also been commented on by J.P. Robert and Batty Weber. Robert, who wrote extensively about the aerial attacks on Luxembourg, interpreted this monument as "no better way to express the magnitude and communality of the sacrifice that they made, some on this side and others on the other side of the front."⁶³² Weber's words are similar, but he stressed the neutral aspect by saying:

“[...] those on the left were killed by the missiles of the Central Powers, those on the right by the missiles of the Entente. You can't be more neutral. That's what happens when you're between the hammer and the anvil on the map.”⁶³³

Weber's comment is the only one encountered during this research which directly acknowledges the Allies' involvement in the deaths of these civilians in

⁶³¹ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 189.

⁶³² As cited in Weber, B. (1922a). Abreißkalender. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (17.06.1922). [Own translation]

⁶³³ Weber, B. (1922b). Abreißkalender. *Luxemburger Zeitung* (20.06.1922). [Own translation]

Bonnevoie and Hollerich. As will be elaborated below, and like the memorial in Clausen, when it comes to naming and blaming the party responsible for these attacks, the Allies are not mentioned, but rather the presence of the German troops in Luxembourg.

8.3.2 First inauguration

Originally planned for 25th May 1922, the inauguration of the memorial had to be postponed to 18th June due to coinciding with the national *Octave* festival and upcoming elections.⁶³⁴ Several newspaper articles reported on this high-profile event, attended by Prince Félix. Contrary to the inauguration of the *Monument du Souvenir*, this time Prince Félix's presence was not commented on negatively despite his active involvement in the Austrian Army. Representatives from France, Belgium, Italy and even the US were also present, with crowds filling the streets of Bonnevoie during the procession to the cemetery.⁶³⁵

In consonance with the post-war narrative, the speeches refrained from addressing the Allies' direct involvement in the air raids, but rather simply pointed the finger at Germany. Gaston Diderich's words echoed this general attitude while also emphasising Luxembourg's close relation with France and Belgium. His speech referred to "dreaded birds of death which the perfidy of the invader"⁶³⁶ had drawn upon the country, even using the words "German barbarism". Further, he highlighted how Luxembourg's involvement on the Western Front would forever create an indestructible bond of affection and solidarity with France and Belgium.⁶³⁷

To drive home the desired attitude and mood that this inauguration and by extension the monument were trying to portray, Commander Croiset's speech included a line by a French poet: "Every man has two countries, his own and then France."⁶³⁸ Croiset continued that France bows piously over the tomb of the civilian deaths, who also died on the field of honour for freedom and ideals, and

⁶³⁴ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 52. Jg., n° 126/127 (06.05.1922), p. 1.

⁶³⁵ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 52. Jg., n° 170 (19.06.1922), p. 1.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[Own translation]

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[Own translation]

France murmuring “Dearest brothers, thank you, thank you!”⁶³⁹ Luxembourg’s Prime Minister Émile Reuter’s words mirrored those of Croiset by saying “French and Luxembourgish hearts beat in unison in these moments when memories of common glory and pain are evoked in front of this monument.”⁶⁴⁰

Without trying to minimise the sacrifice of the *légionnaires* and the horrible fates of the civilians, the choice of words in these speeches seems very deliberate and politically charged. It underlines the shift from Luxembourg’s claim of neutrality, or sitting in the waiting room, to that of being one of the Allies. In sum, the inauguration of the war memorial in Bonnevoie, conforming to most commemorative events held during the interwar period in Luxembourg, clearly accentuates the importance given to this pro-Allies narrative which would remain uncontested for decades.

8.3.3 From dual to triple function

During the 1920s and 1930s, commemorative events were held at the memorial in Bonnevoie mostly on *Toussaint*, forming a bond with the other WWI memorials in the city which were also visited on this occasion to remember the dead. For the next couple of decades, the war memorial maintained its dual purpose until a new important chapter in its biography occurred after WWII.

In the early 1950s, the *Entente des Sociétés de Bonnevoie* wanted to create a dignified memorial remembering the victims of both world wars. As the existing WWI monument started to disappear deeper into the rows of graves, and a plaque from 1945 listing the victims’ names from WWII was only provisional, the idea for a new memorial at a different location gained growing support.⁶⁴¹ The committee of the *Entente des Sociétés de Bonnevoie* spent several months deciding where and how the henceforth named *Monument aux Morts des deux guerres* should take shape. With the support and cooperation of the municipal administration, a new dedicated space for this project was secured within the newer section of the cemetery and next to an entrance, where it remains today.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[Own translation]

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[Own translation]

⁶⁴¹ *Luxemburger Wort*, 110. Jg., n° 229/230 (17.08.1957), p. 11.

Although, this decision reveals the significance attributed to this memorial and its placement, for fear of it being overlooked among the many rows of graves surrounding and obscuring it⁶⁴², the relocation to one of the four corners of the cemetery entailed a number of consequences to be examined below.

Instead of changing or adding to the existing WWI memorial, as often seen in the UK and France, and after considering various options, it was decided to incorporate the obelisk in its entirety and serve as focal point for the new memorial for both world wars. The newly constructed WWII monument was designed as a one-meter-high half crescent wall listing the WWII victims' names to be situated behind the existing memorial, thereby enclosing it.⁶⁴³ By placing it on a slightly elevated platform, the idea was to make the WWI memorial appear to rise skyward like an admonishing and imploring hand.⁶⁴⁴ At the front of the WWI monument, a supplementary large plaque with inscriptions for both conflicts was added to complete this new three-piece memorial space (see Figure 8-14). To further transform this corner of the cemetery into a self-contained memorial site, flowerbeds to the side, hedges all around and trees at the back were also envisioned.⁶⁴⁵

As was the case with the initial WWI monument, the project for the *Monument aux Morts des deux guerres* was a local initiative by the community and financed through door-to-door collections, festivals, lotteries and appeals to former residents of Bonnevoie. Designed by architect Josy Kons and crafted by the companies Jacquemart and Burette, the inaugural event took place on 8th September 1957, in the presence of Hereditary Grand Duke Jean, son of Grand Duchesse Charlotte.⁶⁴⁶ In the words of Pierre Frieden, who delivered one of the speeches on that day, Bonnevoie embarked on a new and commendable path in not interrupting the traditions of WWI by keeping, redesigning, and repurposing the existing monument in its entirety at its rightful place within the cemetery.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴² *Luxemburger Wort*, 108. Jg., n° 57/58 (26.02.1955), p. 7.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁴⁴ *Luxemburger Wort*, 110. Jg., n° 252 (09.09.1957), p. 5.

⁶⁴⁵ *Luxemburger Wort*, 108. Jg., n° 57/58 (26.02.1955), p. 7.

⁶⁴⁶ *Luxemburger Wort*, 110. Jg., n° 252 (09.09.1957), p. 5.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[Own translation]

The *Monument aux Morts des deux guerres*, which can be better defined as memorial site rather than a single war memorial, is a poignant example of how the repurposing and relocation of existing war memorials can alter their initial meaning, function, and impact. No longer a single entity, the WWI obelisk became part of a collective, intertwining both conflicts. In other words, since its second inauguration and relocation, the WWI monument is the centre piece of this new memorial space serving a triple purpose: remembering the fallen *légionnaires*, the civilian victims of WWI, and the victims of WWII. All components of this memorial space are visibly and thematically connected, functioning as an ensemble which cannot be separated. This becomes more evident when looking at the commemorative events in the years that followed.

Referred to by its collective term *Monuments aux Morts*, several newspaper articles from subsequent years reported on different remembrance services and the laying down of flowers at the cemetery. Commemorative events were still held on *Toussaint* or on *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale*, as was also the case at other memorials throughout the country.⁶⁴⁸ Conjointly, the memorial space in Bonnevoie became centre stage for other events such as the centenary of the local firefighter brigade in 1972.⁶⁴⁹ This strongly implies its more collective use as a locus for commemoration beyond its initial meaning and intention as a WWI monument, giving the memorial space yet another layer and function.

8.3.4 Evolution over time

The creation of this dedicated space at one of the four corners of the cemetery not only bestows this site a clear purpose but turns another page in the WWI monument's biography. From 1957 onwards, the WWI memorial's life-story is irrevocably tied to the newly created memorial space and WWII monument. Accordingly, the biography of this memorial site as a collective, including any additional alterations, can also be examined. The next major alteration affecting this space, and by extension the individual monuments, occurred in

⁶⁴⁸ *Luxemburger Wort*, 129. Jg., n° 229 (05.10.1976), p. 5.

⁶⁴⁹ *Luxemburger Wort*, 125. Jg., n° 219 (23.09.1972), p. 9.

1985 when it was decided to build the new ceremonial hall for funerals directly adjacent to it (see Figure 8-16).

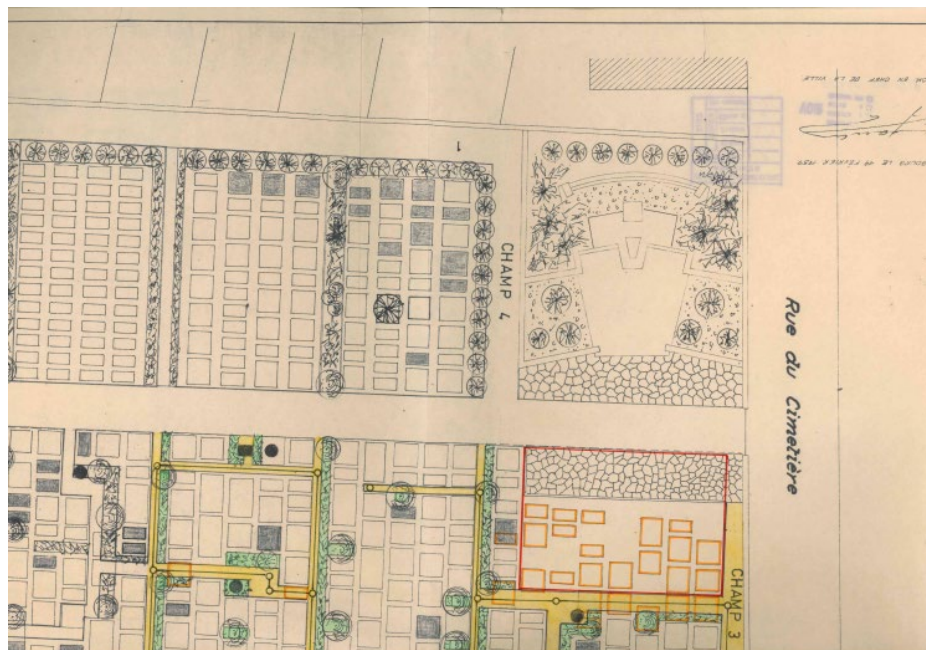


Figure 8-10 Situation plan of the cemetery showing where the hall will be built (in red)
Source: Archives de la Ville de Luxembourg

The graves opposite were to be moved to achieve a better arrangement of the sites available for burials as well as to create room for the construction of the hall.⁶⁵⁰ Examining a situation plan of the cemetery from 1959 used during the planning process in 1985 (Figure 8-10), with the section to hold the new ceremonial hall marked in red, clearly shows that an entrance gate was immediately next to the memorials with a pathway leading past it.⁶⁵¹ The construction of the ceremonial hall did therefore not only considerably affect the memorial space and its visibility depending on viewpoint, but also its access as the entrance gate and pathway were also modified to accommodate for the hall. Both alterations will be discussed in more detail in section 8.3.5.

This in-depth study of the *Monument aux Morts* in Bonnevoie has highlighted that, second to the *Monument du Souvenir*, it has undergone the most significant changes, in particular through its integration into the new purposely designed memorial site dedicated to both world wars and its resulting relocation within the cemetery. These changes can further be illustrated by examining

⁶⁵⁰ LU 11 PD IV/5:113 (Dossier LU 11 IV/5_1937).

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

different photographs which support the memorial's biography by adding life and colour to the otherwise simple descriptions from the written sources thus far leaving much to the imagination. A series of photographs have been selected to enrich the memorial's biography and, in the process, visually compare the evolution from its initial inauguration in 1922 until my visit of the memorial in 2021, highlighting any alterations over the past century. For this purpose, photographs from four different points in time will be used: 1922 (Figure 8-11), 1957 (Figure 8-12 and Figure 8-13), post 1957 (Figure 8-14) and 2021 (Figure 8-15). By linking them to the findings from the phenomenological survey (for details see 8.3.5), a number of observations and conclusions about the memorial and surroundings can complement the existing documental evidence to enhance its life-story and evaluate its modern-day impact as a WWI memorial.



Figure 8-11 Inauguration of memorial in Bonnevoie in 1922
Source: Archives Nationales de Luxembourg

The “*Documentation Historique*” by Tony Ginsbach contains several photographs from the inaugural event in 1922. From these photographs it is difficult to determine what the memorial space looked like as the obelisk is surrounded by a considerable crowd attending the event. Nonetheless, the photographs aid to visualise the memorial's relocation when contrasting them to later photographs and my first-hand experience of visiting the cemetery. On one of these old photographs (Figure 8-11), different crosses from nearby graves are visible in the background and situated to the right side of the memorial. Nowadays, the main

road is to the immediate right of the monument behind the cemetery wall, confirming the relocation. Although other documental evidence exists to support the relocation of the obelisk, having been on site and then matching the findings to the photographs from 1922, has helped to evoke a clearer comprehension and interpretation of this change of locus and its resulting aftereffects, as will be analysed in more detail below (see 8.3.5).



Figure 8-12 Second inauguration of the memorial in Bonnevoie in 1957
Pol Aschman © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg



Figure 8-13 Unveiling of commemorative plaque by Hereditary Grand Duke Jean in 1957
Pol Aschman © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg



Figure 8-14 Memorial space in Bonnevoie post-1957
Source: Archives de la Ville de Luxembourg



Figure 8-15 Memorial space in Bonnevoie, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

Photographs from the 1957 inauguration (Figure 8-12 and Figure 8-13) also aid to visualise the relocation and how the new memorial space with the addition of the WWII monument appeared at the time. Figure 8-13 shows a crowd gathered in the background, a space that is nowadays occupied by the hall. In 1957, the memorial site appeared bigger and more open, as also noticeable on the situation plan of the cemetery (Figure 8-10), yet the construction of the hall in 1985 rendered the site smaller, closed off and tucked away in a corner. Once again, combining the knowledge gathered from written sources and overlapping them with photographs and the observations from the phenomenological exercise, produces a more coherent picture of how the construction of the ceremonial hall influenced this space.

Figure 8-14 shows the memorial space at some point after 1957 (an exact date is not known). Studying this photograph against the one taken in 2021 (Figure 8-15), further allows identification of yet more additional small changes to the memorial site. Although taken from different angles, alterations to the vegetation adorning the site are evident at first glance, even effecting movement. While it was possible to completely walk around the WWI monument and up close to the WWII monument after 1957, the planting of shortcut scrub to the sides and back of the obelisk make this no longer feasible. The trees at the back also changed over the course of half a century. In 1957 during the inaugural event (Figure 8-12), the wall on which people are standing and the house on the right side of the photograph were still visible. In contrast, the photograph from after 1957 (Figure 8-14) reveals a line of trees flanking the memorial space towards the back with the house behind it much more hidden. Over time and as visible in the photograph from 2021 (Figure 8-15), a few trees have been removed creating gaps, thereby making the house more noticeable again.

Additionally, the overgrowing vegetation seen on Figure 8-14, which suggests that the photograph was taken some years after the second inauguration in 1957, has been replaced by neatly arranged flowerbeds. Parts of the paving at the front have also since been changed, likely at the same time as the construction of the ceremonial hall. Whereas the WWI monument itself was not subject to any modifications, a small plaque to the lower right corner on the low

half crescent WWII memorial wall, underneath the date 1945, has been added, as visible on the recent photograph from 2021.

The different photographs of the *Monument aux Morts* in Bonnevoie spanning over a century reveal much about the above-mentioned changes. Yet, the more detailed results of the phenomenological survey enable to fully evaluate the memorial's current impact on observers.

8.3.5 Phenomenological survey results

The interactive map of the “*Éischte Weltkrich*” digital exhibition was consulted during preliminary research, yet the map positions the *Monument aux Morts* wrongly at the corner of *Rue Pierre Krier* and *Rue du Cimetière* in Bonnevoie, almost 500 m north of its actual location at the cemetery (see Appendix 2). Physically visiting war memorials rather than just relying on written sources or maps therefore proves to be an invaluable tool to acquire correct information on their locations and to rectify any previous mistakes or inaccuracies.



Figure 8-16 View of the cemetery with hall from bus stop across the street, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

The cemetery is easily accessible through public transport with bus stops immediately next to it. Standing at the bus stop across the street, the ceremonial hall drew most of my attention given its size. The partially hidden memorial behind it almost became secondary but still immediately noticeable, as this was what I was actively looking for; my perception might therefore differ from other people just walking or driving past (Figure 8-16). As the cemetery is enclosed by a wall, only the top section of the memorial is visible (Figure 8-17). From this perspective, which would reflect the perspective of many people walking or driving past the cemetery, the nature of this memorial remains unknown as the inscription is not visible and without any signposts for the memorial on the main street.



Figure 8-17 View of memorial in Bonnevoie hidden behind the cemetery wall, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

To reach the memorial, I entered the cemetery via the entrance gate left to the ceremonial hall and had to go around the building as the opposite gate adjacent to the memorial was closed. While walking around it, the hall essentially hides the obelisk and the whole memorial space from view, which is similar when approaching the memorial from the other entrance further away along the *Rue du Cimetière*.



Figure 8-18 View of memorial space, with the hall to the right, September 2021
© Laura Zenner

When nearing the memorial space from the upper section of the cemetery, large hedges and trees completely obstructed my view of the memorial, which seems to be neatly tucked away at one of the four corners of the cemetery (Figure 8-18). This has two opposing effects: firstly, it creates a designated memorial space away from any other graves, as was the intention during the planning in

the 1950s, which secondly, results in the whole space being partially or completely hidden from view from these vantage points. Unless a person approaches the cemetery from the *Rue du Cimetière* or walks towards and past the ceremonial hall, this memorial space might remain completely hidden and unknown as no other signposts were found within the cemetery grounds.

The closed entrance gate next to the memorial space on *Rue du Cimetière* suggests that on commemorative days, people can visit the memorial without having to enter the cemetery and walk around the ceremonial hall. The memorial site is big enough to hold small ceremonies yet limiting the number of attendees because of the hall. This space used to be bigger before the construction of the hall, as also apparent on the photograph from the 1957 inauguration (Figure 8-13). The surroundings were all well-kept suggesting that this corner is being looked after by the groundskeeper on a regular basis, trimming the hedges and trees.

The three different memorial structures are all visually connected to another through their carefully planned composition. As I stood in front of the memorial plaque in dedication to the victims of both world wars, the inscription of the WWI monument was clearly legible. The obelisk appeared to be in its original state, with nothing added or removed. The surfaces were relatively clean, apart from obvious marks due to weathering and the natural passing of time.

To read the names of the victims on either side of the obelisk, I had to walk up the two steps. These steps appear to invite any visitor to come closer, to look at the memorials and names listed there, creating a link between those commemorated and those commemorating. Yet, as noted in section 8.3.4, the shortcut scrub was a hindrance to walking around the obelisk to get a better look at the inscriptions on all sides, also creating a distance to the WWII memorial at the back. Reluctantly, I stepped onto the scrub to walk around the memorial to view it from all sides and to take photographs.

As noted elsewhere, the decision-making process for an appropriate site and placement for a memorial of any kind is hardly ever arbitrary, and as the available sources support, the committees behind both inaugurations in

Bonnevoie took great care in this. Yet, this two-way tie between memorial and (re)location has in many cases in the past been underplayed in the study of war memorialisation. As the example of the *Monuments aux Morts* in Bonnevoie demonstrates, this symbiosis is worthy of consideration because the slowly yet ever-changing landscape surrounding a memorial over many years, before and after its initial placement or relocation, rarely happens without any consequences, at least from a phenomenological aspect.

Given its proximity to the busy main street, I noticed many different noise distractions during my visit which took away from the quiet atmosphere most cemeteries evoke. With the intention to create a designated memorial space at this corner of the cemetery, the committee of the *Entente des Sociétés de Bonnevoie* must not have envisioned that this area might one day be affected by augmented traffic noise. An alternative location further away from the main street towards the centre of the cemetery might reduce the noise distractions, especially for commemorative events, and become more visible from other corners of the cemetery. Nevertheless, this might lead to the memorial only being known to people frequenting the cemetery, as it might be no longer (partially) visible from the main street.

Finally, a further important factor to consider regarding the *Monument aux Morts des deux guerres* is its proximity to another type of WWI memorial in Bonnevoie: the street *Rue des Légionnaires*, thereby creating a spatial connection between the obelisk at the cemetery and the street name (see Appendix 2). Despite being a bit further away in distance to each other, the community of Bonnevoie has two separate memorials dedicated to its *légionnaires* within less than a 500 m radius. A simple street name and its proximity to another memorial might at first glance be of little importance and consequence, but as demonstrated in Chapter 5, street names can play a vital role in adding to the memorial landscape and reinforcing the narrative of historical events.

8.3.6 Conclusion

The *Monument aux Morts des deux guerres* in Bonnevoie has one of the most interesting biographies of the WWI memorials studied during this research. Its biography has primarily been shaped by a relocation within the cemetery and its integration into a memorial space dedicated to both world wars. War memorials commemorating WWI and WWII (and any other war that a nation was involved in) are nothing unique and can be found all over the world. Nevertheless, in most instances, the names of victims and other dedications to other wars tend to be added to an existing war memorial, rather than by the creation of a completely new memorial space at a new location. Relocations of war memorials are also not unheard of and may have happened for various reasons. However, the decision to relocate a war memorial, and in fact any memorial, ultimately entails significant changes and consequences which are worth taking into consideration and analysing.

As the memorial in Bonnevoie demonstrates, its relocation and changing of its surroundings, including the construction of the hall in the 1980s, had a direct impact on its accessibility, visibility, and general perception. Even though a dedicated memorial site was created, it is also tucked away at one of the four corners of the cemetery and nowadays partially hidden by the large ceremonial hall or hedges depending on vantage point. It thereby greatly affects how the memorial must have been perceived when initially erected in 1922 and after its relocation and second inauguration in 1957, before the existence of the hall.

Moreover, it is the only known example in Luxembourg which commemorates both civilian victims killed by the Allies and soldiers fighting alongside the Allies. It is a physical manifestation of the complexity of Luxembourg's ambiguous neutrality and post-war narrative. Yet, due to the omission of the originators of the air raids, this complexity will go unnoticed by anyone unfamiliar with Luxembourg's wartime experience. Like the memorial in Clausen, this omission can only have been deliberate to propagate the pro-Allies narrative. This narrative remained uncontested partially because of this deliberate omission. It is therefore critical to reflect on the existing war memorials and be more conscious about what they remember, in which way and what is excluded.

8.4 Chapter Summary

The *Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf* and the *Monument aux Morts des deux guerres* in Bonnevoie are the only known examples among the Luxembourgish WWI memorials remembering civilian victims. In both cases the monuments list the names of the citizens of these respective quarters of Luxembourg City killed by aerial bombardment. What makes the monument in Bonnevoie stand apart from the one in Clausen, and in fact all other Luxembourgish WWI memorials, is its integration of the local fallen *légionnaires*. Bonnevoie is therefore the only known WWI memorial in Luxembourg which commemorates both civilians and soldiers, giving it a dual function since its inception.

Both war memorials are a physical and visual representation of Luxembourg's complex and ambiguous neutrality during the war. At the same time, they mirror the narrative constructed during the interbellum which places Luxembourg on the side of the Allies and puts the sole blame on Germany. They demonstrate how omission of certain facts can alter the impression and influence the knowledge of the historical event being remembered. They are hence loaded with political undertones and are anything but neutral. As illustrated throughout this thesis, this is in fact a reoccurring theme for most WWI memorials in Luxembourg constructed in the 1920s.

By synthesising data gathered through desk-based assessment and active fieldwork, this chapter has managed to piece together a much more completed life-story of these two local memorials for the very first time. Stretching over their hundred-year long history, this chapter sheds light on their evolution from the interwar era up to the present day, highlighting the various changes to the structures themselves and their surroundings. While the memorial in Bonnevoie is primarily marked by relocation and integration into a memorial space for both world wars, the memorial in Clausen has remained static throughout the years but being heavily impacted by the developing urban landscape around it.

To conclude, the two case studies in this chapter prove again that an interdisciplinary approach combining written and photographic sources as well as

actively engaging with them through phenomenological and experiential fieldwork in a contemporary setting can vastly enrich the study of war memorials, memorialisation, commemoration, and collective memory. On one side it points out the physical and visual alterations to the memorials and surroundings, while on the other side it allows for a better understanding of their meaning and importance over time, highlighting possible changes in attitude towards them.

Chapter 9 Memorial plaques

9.1 Introduction

As listed in the inventory of WWI memorials in Luxembourg (see Appendix 1) and noted in Chapter 5, a total of seven WWI memorials can be classified as memorial plaques, with one even having the dual function of medal of honour. These plaques can be found in Differdange, Walferdange, Tétange, Esch-sur-Alzette and three in Luxembourg City respectively (see Appendix 2). Due to the scope of this thesis, this chapter only elaborates on four of these seven memorial plaques, although the inventory provides a short summary on the remaining plaques. The first plaque covered in this chapter remembers François Faber, known for his success as racing cyclist and who died on the Western Front in 1915 serving in the *Légion étrangère*. The second plaque is located in Tétange, commemorating the fallen *légionnaires* originating or having lived in this town. The third plaque is equally dedicated to the fallen *légionnaires* native of Esch-sur-Alzette. Lastly, this chapter also examines a small plaque mounted on the back wall at the cemetery in Differdange. Contrary to the abovenamed plaques, it does not commemorate Luxembourgish *légionnaires*, but Alfred Furgerot, a French pilot shot down over Differdange in 1917. This memorial plaque is nonetheless noteworthy as it underlines the Franco-Luxembourgish relations at the time.

WWI memorial plaques have not yet received much attention within secondary literature or academic publications. Even though some of the plaques are listed in existing secondary sources, the information is extremely limited, occasionally out of date and consequently partially inaccurate. This demonstrates that no further investigation into these small memorial plaques was undertaken to note down or comment on the different changes, and even relocations, that this chapter addresses. Each case study of the four selected memorial plaques analysed and discussed in this chapter thus provides their biography as complete as possible given the resources available and consulted, combined with additional research and the observations from the phenomenological survey.

9.2 François Faber



Figure 9-1 Memorial plaque for François Faber, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

9.2.1 Champion-cycliste and légionnaire

François Faber is predominantly known in Luxembourg for his outstanding road bicycle racing career and being the first Luxembourger, and in fact first non-French cyclist, to win the prestigious *Tour de France* in 1909. Born in France to a Luxembourgish father, Faber was of French nationality before he decided to adopt Luxembourgish nationality to avoid conscription into the French Army and to continue his cycling career. Nevertheless, when war broke out, Faber enlisted in the *Légion étrangère* as a Luxembourgish volunteer fighting and dying for his

birth country France.⁶⁵² When it comes to his motivations for volunteering, despite having previously actively avoided military service, the following quote is often referenced although the exact source is unknown: “France made my fortune, it is normal that I defend it.”⁶⁵³

Faber’s success and fame as a racing cyclist followed by his active service during WWI has turned him into arguably the best-known Luxembourgish *légionnaire*, being remembered by different memorials. Two plaques in his memory can be found in France: one in Notre Dame de Lorette near Arras and another in Mont-Saint-Éloi, close to where he died during the Battle of Artois on 9th May 1915. A third plaque is in Luxembourg City. Even though a comparative study of these three different memorial plaques would be of interest to determine similarities and differences in war memorialisation trends of the same historical figure across borders, this thesis will focus solely on the plaque situated in Luxembourg City, whose biography is primarily marked by relocations within the capital. In addition to the plaques, Faber is also remembered every year through the cycling race *Grand Prix François Faber*.⁶⁵⁴

9.2.2 Inception, design, and location

The idea for a memorial in Faber’s honour to be erected in Luxembourg came to fruition in the interwar period, initiated by his Luxembourgish supporters and friends. The *Comité d’initiative pour commémorer le souvenir de notre grand champion François Faber* was formed in June 1922 with the aim to create a fitting memorial to keep his memory in and outside Luxembourg alive.⁶⁵⁵ Interestingly, Faber is usually referred to as a fellow countryman in the articles dealing with this subject, despite the fact that he only had Luxembourgish nationality for a short while, rarely visited the country and did not speak the Luxembourgish language. It is thus difficult to determine if Faber considered

⁶⁵² Scuto, D. (2018b), p. 5; Leroy, P. (2020) François Faber, dans l’ombre du « Géant de Colombes ». In: S. Camarda et al. (eds.) *op. cit.*, pp. 216-217.

⁶⁵³ As cited in Scuto, D. (2018b), p. 5.

[Own translation]

⁶⁵⁴ Blasen, L. (1985b), p. 26.

⁶⁵⁵ *Obermosel-Zeitung*, 42. Jg., n° 90 (15.06.1922), p. 3; Blasen, L. (1985b), p. 25.

himself Luxembourgish, but he is being wholeheartedly embraced as a patriot by the nation.

The plaque was financed by means of a public subscription through contributions from local sports enthusiasts and clubs. The appeal for additional financial support put strong emphasis on Faber's extraordinary successes before the war and that he, as so many other young compatriots, fought and died for freedom and justice, as printed in corresponding newspaper articles. In terms of location, the outer wall of the restaurant at the velodrome in Belair, an affluent quarter in Luxembourg City, was chosen.⁶⁵⁶ The velodrome seems a very fitting spot for Faber's plaque given his career and success as a cyclist. This choice of location as well as the plaque being strongly supported by sport enthusiasts underlines the fact that Faber is not just being commemorated as a *légionnaire* who died at the Western Front, but as one of Luxembourg's greatest athletes. The plaque can therefore be considered having a dual function and goes beyond the common war memorial for public figures or soldiers.

Despite this binary function and meaning, Faber's memory as a racing cyclist takes prominence over his experience as a *légionnaire*. This is also apparent in its design and inscription. Professor J. B. Wercollier was tasked with the design of said plaque and the result was a portrait of Faber in the form of a relief, crafted in the workshop of Michel Haagen with a marble frame manufactured in the workshops of Jacquemart. Wercollier received praise for his accurate portrayal of Faber, even recreating his characteristic facial traits, which would allow even later generations to be able to see what Faber looked like, as noted by Léon Blasen.⁶⁵⁷ Yet, Faber is not being represented as a soldier but as a cyclist. Apart from his name and the words *champion-cycliste*, the inscription also does not mention that he was a *légionnaire*, or his date and place of death. Only the laurel branch, being a symbol for military victories but also achievements in sports, can be interpreted as a reference to both his experience at the Western Front and his victories as a racing cyclist before the war.

⁶⁵⁶ *Escher Tageblatt*, n° 270 (18.11.1922), p. 4.

⁶⁵⁷ Blasen, L. (1985b), pp. 25-26; *Escher Tageblatt*, n° 270 (18.11.1922), p. 4.

9.2.3 Inauguration

The inaugural event on 15th August 1924 further encapsulates the plaque's commemorative duality. The inauguration started with a procession of various cycling societies from Luxembourg Gare through the capital, stopping at the *Monument du Souvenir* where Faber's young daughter laid down flowers.⁶⁵⁸ Marcel Cahen, who represented the municipality of Luxembourg City, spoke a few words emphasising Faber's sacrifice and heroic example. Cahen also highlighted that Faber, who recalled his Luxembourgish origins during the war, had wished "to mix his blood with the blood with which the Luxembourgish volunteers sealed the age-old and enduring union between France and Luxembourg."⁶⁵⁹ The procession, which was led by another Luxembourgish racing cyclist and *Tour de France* winner, Nicolas Frantz, then continued to the velodrome where the plaque was inaugurated in the presence of Faber's widow, daughter, and mother. Local newspaper *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise* concluded that the inauguration took on the proportions of a lovely Franco-Luxembourgish event.⁶⁶⁰

Just as with any other WWI memorial of that time, the inauguration of the plaque in honour of François Faber is yet another strong example of how during the interwar period the various commemorative events carried a profound pro-Allies and in particular pro-French connotation, further feeding into the narrative. To an extent, Faber's personal connection and relationship with both France and Luxembourg were ideal to emphasise the age-old and enduring union of these two countries that Cahen spoke of in his speech. It can however be hypothesised that if Faber were born and raised in Germany before adopting the Luxembourgish nationality, the outcome might have been different. It would indeed be interesting to know if Faber would have received the same recognition if he had died on the 'wrong side' of the trenches, despite still being one of Luxembourg's greatest athletes.

⁶⁵⁸ *Luxemburger Wort*, n° 225 (12.08.1924), p. 6.

⁶⁵⁹ As cited in *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 229. Edition de 18 h. (16.08.1924), p. 2. [Own translation]

⁶⁶⁰ *Luxemburger Wort*, n° 225 (12.08.1924), p. 6; *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 54. Jg., n° 229. Edition de 18 h. (16.08.1924), p. 2.

9.2.4 Relocations

As mentioned elsewhere and illustrated with the example of the monument in Bonnevoie, war memorials can be subjected to a relocation, yet what is rather unique about Faber's plaque is that it changed location not just once but twice after its inauguration in 1924. Initially, the plaque remained at the velodrome but following its closure and becoming private property - and demolished a few years later - it was decided to move the plaque a few kilometres north to the municipal stadium, nowadays known as *Stade Josy Barthel* (see Appendix 2).⁶⁶¹ Ironically, without most people knowing about it, Faber's plaque was for a very long time in close proximity to another WWI memorial, or at least part of it: the broken *Gëlle Fra* statue, rediscovered underneath the stadium in 1981.

The relocation of Faber's plaque also entailed a second inauguration that took place on 1st August 1937, attended by Faber's widow and daughter, various cycling associations, as well as the president des *Volontaires luxembourgeois de la Grande Guerre*, amongst other guests. Cahen once again held a speech recalling Faber's successes as a cyclist and his engagement as volunteer during the war, whose memory will forever remain for cyclists and Luxembourgish patriots alike.⁶⁶² Like its first inauguration, the notion of dual function prevailed and similar to the velodrome, the location at the stadium made a strong connection to Faber's athletic background. Detailed information about any annual commemorative ceremonies at this site could not be found during this research. However, to mark Faber's 75th birthday, a new plaque by the *Union Cyclist Ardennaise* from Wiltz with a corresponding inscription was installed on 15th August 1962, mounted to the left of another small plaque by the *Amis et admirateurs de François Faber*.⁶⁶³

Even though the plaque's placement at the stadium was seen as definitive at the time of its second inauguration⁶⁶⁴, and despite Faber's portrait set within its elegant marble frame and nicely enveloped by ivy giving it almost the impression of an altar or shrine (Figure 9-2), the plaque's new home was rather

⁶⁶¹ Blasen, L. (1985b), p. 26; *Luxembourg*, 3. Jg., n° 214 (02.08.1937), p. 3.

⁶⁶² *Luxembourg*, 3. Jg., n° 214 (02.08.1937), p. 3.

⁶⁶³ Blasen, L. (1985b), p. 26.

⁶⁶⁴ *Luxembourg*, 3. Jg., n° 214 (02.08.1937), p. 3.

unfavourable as it was not at a prominent spot, almost hidden away and therefore seemed to fade into obscurity. Commenting on the unfortunate location of the plaque next to the side entrance of the stadium in his article from 1985, Léon Blasen argued that most people have likely never even seen the plaque.⁶⁶⁵ After visiting the plaque himself, thereby unknowingly undertaking a phenomenological-like study, Blasen wrote that Faber's portrait on the plaque seemed to be saying "Do something to get me out of this dark sulk corner and put me somewhere in a light place where everyone can see me."⁶⁶⁶

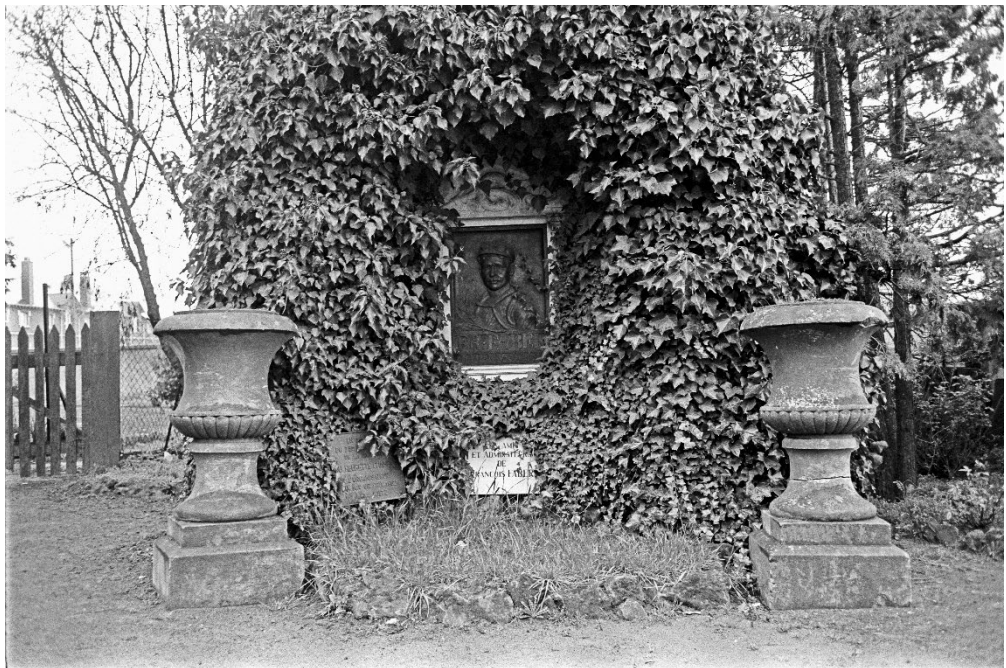


Figure 9-2 Faber's plaque at its location next to the stadium in 1965
Jean Weyrich © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg

Considering that Faber's body was never found and that his widow and daughter viewed the plaque somewhat as his gravestone, Luxembourg owed him a better location to be remembered, according to Blasen.⁶⁶⁷ Blasen's comments were echoed by the *Amicale des Anciens Coureurs Cyclistes* in the late 1980s describing the plaque as being at an isolated corner of the city, calling for a more worthy spot. In fact, the whole cycling scene had criticised the move from the velodrome to the stadium for a long time. Official mentions and demands of

⁶⁶⁵ Blasen, L. (1985b), p. 26

⁶⁶⁶ Blasen, L. (1985b), p. 26.

[Own translation]

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

having the plaque once again relocated started in 1988. However, deciding on the best location proved lengthy with several suggestions being made.⁶⁶⁸

The *Parc Municipal* next to the city centre was among the initial proposals, alongside *Rue François Faber* in Limpertsberg. The *Amicale des Anciens Coureurs Cyclistes* feared though that the plaque would have a similar fate as next to the stadium, being too hidden away. Instead, they favoured either *Place de Paris* or *Place de Metz*, the latter being considered as extremely opportune with the *Tour de France* set to depart from there in 1989 (see Appendix 2). However, these suggestions presented different logistical as well as financial hurdles. There was either not a suitable wall to attach the plaque or it would require the installation of a granite stele with concrete base. Eventually, the decision circled back to the first proposal of moving the plaque to the *Parc Municipal* and fixing it on the south facing side of the old *reduit*.⁶⁶⁹

Before the plaque could be moved from the stadium to the park in 1990, some modifications had to be made. According to archival records, due to risk of degradation, the architect-director proposed to make a cast of the relief initially made of a steel plate and to redo it in bronze. The mayor of Luxembourg City also approved the addition of a separate plaque to be fixed underneath the new bronze relief⁶⁷⁰, containing additional information about his success as *Tour de France* winner, having died in battle in 1915 and being recipient of the *Croix de guerre* medal.⁶⁷¹ The aforementioned small plaques by *Union Cyclist Ardennaise* from Wiltz and by *Amis et admirateurs de François Faber* seem to have been abandoned.

This new plaque, sans its elegant marble frame, was inaugurated on 1st June 1991, in association with the *Fédération du Sport Cycliste Luxembourgeoise*, *Association des Croix de guerre*, *Amicale Albert Ungeheuer*, and the *Amicale des Anciens Coureurs Cyclistes*.⁶⁷² Despite always being binary, the addition of the second plaque and mentions of his involvement in the war finally make Faber's

⁶⁶⁸ LU 11 IV/5 5028.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷¹ Inscription in original French text: "Vainqueur du Tour de France 1909 – Tombé au champ d'honneur en 1915 – Médaille Militaire Croix de guerre".

⁶⁷² LU 11 IV/5 5028.

memorial's dual function and meaning more visible and apparent to any observer who might not be familiar with Faber. Through this, the memorial plaque took on a much more obvious war memorial connotation and dimension.



Figure 9-3 Memorial wall for national cyclists at Parc Municipal, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

Even so, this was not the last time that Faber's plaque witnessed changes. Since its second relocation to the old *reduit* at the park, where it remains to this day, the plaque has gradually been joined by three additional plaques of famous Luxembourgish racing cyclists: Nicolas Frantz, Elsy Jacobs, and Charly Gaul (Figure 9-3). Although slightly varying, all plaques take the same basic form and design concept showing the cyclists' portrait as a relief thereby keeping with the tradition of Faber's plaque and creating a new homogenous memorial site for national cyclists, as also observed during the phenomenological exercise.

9.2.5 Phenomenological survey results

The *Parc Municipal* is very centrally situated within the capital (see Appendix 2), just a short walk from tram and bus stops, thereby easily accessible. Over the years, the *Parc Municipal* has become the location for various other statues of important national and international figures, such as Luxembourgish author and

journalist Batty Weber, French writer Victor Hugo and Luxembourgish philanthropist and women's rights campaigner Aline Mayrisch.⁶⁷³ The exact location of Faber's plaque within the *Parc Municipal* was not known before undertaking the phenomenological survey. I approached the park coming from *Boulevard Royal* and then *Avenue Émile Reuter* and entered the northern part of the park through the first entrance, next to *Villa Vauban*. I followed the footpath leading past the *Villa Vauban*, then taking a slight left turn rather than taking the path straight ahead. As expected, there were no signposts for the plaque within the park, but after only a couple more metres along this path, the old *reduit* with the four portrait plaques slowly came into view (see Figure 9-3).



Figure 9-4 View of the plaques coming from the left, partially hidden by vegetation, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

⁶⁷³ Kmec, S. (2009), p. 44.

Taking the approach as described above provides a full and clear view of the four plaques without any obstructions. The memorial site can also be approached from two footpaths coming from left and right respectively, with the intersections of all three paths merging just in front of the memorial plaques. When I approached the site from those two other directions, presenting a different angle, the plaques are initially not directly visible, obscured slightly by trees and other vegetation (Figure 9-4). Yet, when walking closer and given the considerable size of the old reduit and the plaques, they easily come into view and are not in risk of being overlooked.

The memorial site and the individual plaques were all well-kept and clean. The inscriptions were fully legible but due to the dark tone of the plaques and the contrast to the lettering, I had to stand closer for an easier read. A small footpath leads up to the plaques which gives the impression to invite people in and allows for flowers and wreaths to be laid down underneath the plaques. Its placement within the park, surrounded by trees and ivy growing down the old reduit, gives the whole site a rather picturesque feeling, almost morphing itself into the surrounding nature. Nonetheless, some of the ivy is expanding and this could run the risk of growing over the portraits if not regularly cut back. This was already the case for Faber's plaque during my visit, with a couple of branches reaching into his portrait.

Being within a park, the atmosphere could generally be described as relatively tranquil considering its central location. A few people were walking through the park or even relaxing on the lush green grass or benches. Nevertheless, the phenomenological survey was carried out during the end of August 2021 when the yearly funfair *Schueberfouer* takes place mere metres away from the park. This proximity to the *Schueberfouer* meant that I could hear the cheers from people enjoying themselves at the funfair along with the noise from the rollercoasters and other attractions, thereby impacting the otherwise quiet atmosphere.

During the time I took notes and photographs of this memorial site, I noticed a few people walking past, some without paying closer attention to the plaques, while others stopped shortly to look at the plaques and inscriptions. Although

Faber's plaque does not give the impression of a war memorial at first glance, with the only indication of his war experience being the inscription in the accompanying smaller plaque underneath the portrait, this location allows the plaque to be seen by more people. The relocation from the dark corner next to the stadium to this open spot within the park clearly benefits the plaque in terms of visibility, recognition, and purpose as a memorial, not just as a cyclist but also as a *légionnaire*. Faber as *champion-cycliste* remains the more dominant aspect of this memorial, but through this relocation and the additional plaque a re-balance towards Faber as *légionnaire* also occurred.

9.2.6 Conclusion

Faber's plaque is a memorial to him as a cyclist first and a war memorial second. The plaque's design and theme along with its first two locations already gave the plaque a stronger connection to Faber's achievements as cyclists, despite his active service in the *Légion étrangère* and the bond between France and Luxembourg being highlighted during the first two inauguration events. Although the spatial and visual link to sports has been removed at the plaque's third and likely final location, the plaque's role and purpose as a war memorial seems again more subdued since the other cyclists have joined him. This might also explain why the plaque is not always listed as a WWI memorial in secondary sources and excluded from the interactive map of the digital WWI exhibition. Nevertheless, it should still be considered as a war memorial, and given its interesting biography marked by two relocations, it is worthy of consideration within the study of war memorialisation.

In sum, Faber's plaque at the *Parc Municipal* allows for older generations to be reminded of Faber's life while also inviting newer generations to discover and learn more about him. The plaque succeeds thereby in keeping his memory both as a cyclist and *légionnaire* alive, just as envisioned during the interwar period.

9.3 Tétange



Figure 9-5 Memorial plaque in Tétange, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

9.3.1 Souvenir à Nos Frères de Combat

A small memorial plaque titled “*SOUVENIR à Nos Frères de Combat*” (Remembrance to Our Brothers in Arms) commemorates eight *légionnaires* of Tétange, a former industrial town in the south of Luxembourg. The plaque honours Jacques Paul Huss who died, as the inscription on the plaque phrases it, gloriously in 1918, and Albert Charles Thill who died near Verdun in 1916. At the bottom of the plaque in small print, the names of the other six *légionnaires* of Tétange, who survived the war, are also listed (Figure 9-5).

This plaque is not featured on the interactive map of the digital WWI exhibition but is briefly mentioned in the catalogue of the exhibition “*Légionnaires*”, informing that a memorial plaque for Huss and Thill was mounted at the local church. Nevertheless, this catalogue fails to mention that the plaque has long since been moved to a different location within the town and can now be found at the gable wall of the primary school of Tétange. The memorial plaque of Tétange is therefore another great example of how despite being mentioned in

secondary literature, in this case because it relates to the memorialisation of the *légionnaires*, an in-depth study of most WWI memorials in Luxembourg, in particular small and local memorials, has not yet been attempted, thereby failing to include information of its relocation.

Newspaper articles from October and November 1919 and the book “1916-1991: OGB-L, Sektion Tetingen” inform on the identity of the eight *légionnaires* who were either natives of Tétange, temporarily resided in the town or whose parents might have been from Tétange. One of the *légionnaires* mentioned, Antoine Hoffmann, raised however some doubts about his name as records held at the town’s archive did not match up, and it was assumed that his name was in fact Franz Hoffmann.⁶⁷⁴ Moreover, an additional resident of Tétange who served during the war is named: Victor Beaudoux, a French native living in Tétange, who was conscripted into the regular army due to his French citizenship. Although not a *légionnaire*, Beaudoux is still considered one of the heroes of Tétange. Beaudoux can be found on a souvenir postcard titled “*Les héros de Tétange 1914-1918*” sold to collect funds for the construction of the *Monument du Souvenir* in the capital.⁶⁷⁵ While his portrait is included on souvenir postcards, his name does not feature on the memorial plaque.

The same sources further include details on the memorial plaque and corresponding remembrance event. The local *Comité du Souvenir* of Tétange commissioned the plaque made of marble and copper, executed by one of the surviving six *légionnaires* and resident of Tétange, Pierre Müller. Mounted towards the back wall inside the local church, the plaque was unveiled on 28th October 1919 during a small remembrance service.⁶⁷⁶ With the unveiling occurring as early as October 1919, the plaque of Tétange is thereby the second oldest WWI memorial in Luxembourg among those identified during my research; the oldest being the plaque in Hamm (see Appendix 1).

⁶⁷⁴ Kauffmann, J., Bockler, F. and Onofhängege Gewerkschaftsbond Lëtzebuerg Section Tetange (1991), pp. 92-98; *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 49. Jg., n° 253 (28.10.1919), p. 1.

⁶⁷⁵ Kauffmann, J. et al. (1991), p. 90.

⁶⁷⁶ Kauffmann, J. et al. (1991), pp. 87-90; *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 49. Jg., n° 252 (27.10.1919), p. 1; *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 49. Jg., n° 257/258 (01.11.1919), pp. 1-2.

The small commemorative ceremony was reportedly attended by the whole town, family members of the fallen *légionnaires*, the six surviving *légionnaires*, a delegation of French officers and soldiers, the *légionnaires* of Esch-sur-Alzette, and members of the central *Comité du Souvenir* and *Aide aux Légionnaires*. Similar to other inauguration events in the interwar period, the event took on a very Franco-Luxembourgish character, the church decorated with French and Luxembourgish flags and *La Marseillaise* being played. Interestingly, the ceremony was held in the schoolyard of the local school, which would become the new location of the memorial plaque a few decades later.⁶⁷⁷

9.3.2 Removal during WWII and relocation

The memorial plaque fell victim to the Nazis during their occupation of Luxembourg. A newspaper article from April 1945 reported on the return of the memorial plaque to its former place inside the church decorated with tricolour ribbons after being removed following a decree in 1943. The plaque was kept in 'safe hands' during the rest of the occupation as mentioned in the article, though details on where and by whom the plaque was stored were not given.⁶⁷⁸ The *Gëlle Fra* is hence not the only WWI memorial that was destroyed or temporarily removed between 1940 and 1944, which raises the question if other WWI memorials were targeted by the Nazis. The same article also referred to *Rue des Légionnaires*, changed into *Brückenstrasse* during the Nazi occupation, to hopefully regain its former name, making all those German signs disappear.⁶⁷⁹

It was then on 14th August 1949 when the monument for the martyrs of 1940-1945 was inaugurated at the gable wall of the primary school, that the WWI plaque was moved to its current site. In the presence of the Hereditary Grand Duke Jean and invited French officers, this remembrance service was also attended by aforementioned *légionnaire* Pierre Müller who in a short speech honoured his fellow combatants, making this a dual commemorative event for both world wars. Just as in 1919, this event was characterised by Franco-Luxembourgish dimensions, emphasising the friendly relations between both

⁶⁷⁷ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 49. Jg., n° 257/258 (01.11.1919), p. 1; *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 49. Jg., n° 252 (27.10.1919), p. 1.

⁶⁷⁸ *Luxemburger Wort*, n° 97/98 (07.04.1945), p. 3.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

countries and with once again *La Marseillaise* and the Luxembourgish national anthem being played.⁶⁸⁰ Reasons as to why it was decided to move the plaque are not conclusive from the sources consulted, but it can be speculated that Tétange wanted to create a communal memorial space for both world wars. The implications of this change of location and inclusion within this shared memorial space for both world wars next to the school will be discussed below in relation to the phenomenological survey.

At this point, it is important to highlight that a mystery surrounds this WWI plaque. Towards the end of my research, I was informed by staff members of the *Administration Communale de Kayl* (the local council to which Tétange belongs) that the plaque has since been replaced by a replica. When or why, it was decided to replace the original plaque with an exact copy remains unknown. After consultation with a local historian, no further information could be gathered as there are seemingly also no written records about this decision. It is, however, speculated that this might have occurred when the school building was renovated. As for the reason, it is likely that the original plaque was replaced to prevent damage.

The original plaque is now on display at Tétange's local museum. Unfortunately, these insights were only brought to my attention after I had already concluded all of my fieldwork and data collection. None of the sources I had consulted or previous correspondence with the local council made any mentions of this fact. It is therefore possible that many in the community are also unaware of this. Consequently, the results from my phenomenological survey below relate to the replica mounted at the gable wall of the school.

⁶⁸⁰ Kauffmann, J. et al. (1991), pp. 87-90; Tageblatt, n° 187 (16.08.1949), p. 7.

9.3.3 Phenomenological survey results

Given the school's central location, the plaque - or replica in this case - was easy to find; however, it was the adjacent WWII memorial that drew in all of my attention at first (Figure 9-6). This WWII memorial with the inscription “*Tétange à ses Martyrs 1940-1945*” is visible even from a distance due to its considerable size (Figure 9-7). Just next to it, surrounded by hedges, is a smaller WWII stone memorial dedicated to the Luxembourgish youths who were forcibly conscripted into the Wehrmacht. When assessing this space comprising of three separate memorials and its immediate surrounding, a few things were observed during my visit.



Figure 9-6 View of primary school in Tétange with memorials, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

Firstly, this memorial space seems at first glance to only commemorate WWII. While the gable wall and large WWII monument are easily noticeable from most vantage points, the small dark plaque for the *légionnaires* next to the large WWII memorial, sometimes hidden by trees or other buildings, only comes into view when approaching the memorial space. Seen from a distance, a passer-by unsuspecting of the inscription on the plaque would not know that this plaque is linked to WWI and could get the false impression that it is another WWII

memorial or an information panel about the adjacent WWII monument (Figure 9-7). Only when standing directly in front of the plaque can the inscription for the *légionnaires* be read, although the darkness of the plaque makes this a slightly difficult task. The close-up photograph of the plaque (Figure 9-5) could also only be taken by standing on my tiptoes, highlighting once again the subjectiveness of this phenomenological approach, as a taller person would have less problems. Clearer lettering for the inscription, a slightly lower positioning and further to the right to create some distance from the WWII monument would therefore have been more beneficial to appreciate the plaque as a memorial on its own.



Figure 9-7 View of school as seen from across Rue des Légionnaires, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

Secondly, as visible on Figure 9-6, the open space in front of the memorials which is sectioned off from the main footpath leading past the school implies that it was purposefully designed to be used for annual commemorative events where flowers and wreaths can be laid down. Interestingly, a small commemorative ceremony held during the centenary of WWI did not take place at this dedicated memorial space but at a different memorial located next to the cemetery of Tétange. This other memorial has no connection to WWI, but is

instead linked to the invasion on 10th May 1940.⁶⁸¹ Another remembrance service on 11th November 2021, as organised by the commune Kayl which includes Tétange, was held in front of this other memorial.⁶⁸² Why it was decided to hold this service there rather than at the WWI memorial plaque at the school remains unanswered at this stage. This would require further follow-ups with the organisers of the event and local council. Nonetheless, it already raises questions whether residents are in fact aware of this small plaque for the *légionnaires*.

Thirdly, the modifications made to accommodate this WWII monument at the gable wall are also very noticeable as the outlines of the bricked up main door and windows are still recognisable today.⁶⁸³ This shows how a space which used to have a different function in the past, in this case the entrance to the school, can change and gain a whole new purpose through the integration of a memorial. Therefore, surroundings and structures do not only have an impact on war memorials, but also vice versa.

Fourthly, given its location at a primary school with an adjacent schoolyard, a certain level of noise distractions on regular days can be assumed. As my visit occurred on a Sunday and during the summer school holidays, the atmosphere must be very different to a normal school day. The same conclusion can be made for the noise level coming from the one of the town's main streets next to the school, which was already prominent during my visit but would certainly be more elevated on schooldays than on a Sunday during summer.

Lastly, a few meters away from this memorial space, information panels recounting the history of the town can be found along the street (Figure 9-8). Marking the town centre, one of these panels notes in both French and German, supported by photographs and maps, of different buildings and streets of this area and its changes over time. This panel informs of a street named after the *légionnaires*, the *Rue des Légionnaires*, which is the street where said panel is located, and also the main street with the traffic passing the school. The panel

⁶⁸¹ *Luxemburger Wort*, 168. Jg., n° 276 (25.11.2016), p. 42.

⁶⁸² Administration Communale de Kayl (2023) *Armistice - 11.11.2021*.

⁶⁸³ Kauffmann, J. et al. (1991), p. 90.

mentions nine men (thereby including Frenchman Victor Beaudeau) who fought during WWI and includes a copy of the abovementioned souvenir postcard with the men's portraits.

To remember these brave soldiers, the former *Rue des Ponts* was renamed *Rue des Légionnaires*; background information on this has already been outlined in Chapter 5 regarding commemorative street names. Although the panel also states that two of the men died on the battlefields, it does not refer or signpost to the plaque just around the corner. Nonetheless, a spatial connection between two WWI memorials exists, similar to the memorial in Bonnevoie and its own *Rue des Légionnaires*.



Figure 9-8 Information panel in Tétange, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

9.3.4 Conclusion

Given its central positioning within the town centre next to *Rue des Légionnaires*, where some of the *légionnaires* are said to have lived, the memorial plaque grows in significance and meaning, giving it more personal and emotional power, comparable to the memorial in Clausen and its link to the square it is located in. It can be argued that if the WWI plaque were still situated within the church or even at an unrelated location, it would not have the same context and effect it carries today. Additionally, further research is required to answer questions related to the replica.

Despite its small size, and being at a public, active, and lively space, the plaque is also more visible and accessible to people than at its former location inside the church, even if it remains overshadowed by its WWII counterparts. This dwarfing in size compared to the WWII monument at the gable wall can be interpreted as a visual representation of the polarity in importance and standing that these two conflicts hold among the Luxembourgish population, making the contrast of '*petite guerre*' vs *Grande Guerre* a lot more evident.

9.4 Esch-sur-Alzette



Figure 9-9 Memorial plaque for légionnaires from Esch-sur-Alzette
Source: Musée National de la Résistance

9.4.1 In memory of the légionnaires from Esch-sur-Alzette

As early as November 1919, the *Aide aux Légionnaires*, who had their head office in Esch-sur-Alzette (shortened Esch), launched the proposal of installing plaques commemorating the fallen *légionnaires* at the town halls of all the municipalities from where these combatants originated before migrating to France. Through this it was hoped to record the names of these modest and obscure heroes to posterity, as a sign of recognition and admiration, as printed in *L'Indépendance*

luxembourgeoise.⁶⁸⁴ As no other such plaques listing the names of their *légionnaires* at other town halls throughout Luxembourg could be identified, this proposal by the *Aide aux Légionnaires* was seemingly only realised in Esch.

Crafted by Italian painter and sculptor Duilio Donzelli, the plaque made from white marble features the coats of arms of the city of Esch alongside French and Luxembourgish military decorations.⁶⁸⁵ The inscription reads “*À la mémoire des engagés volontaires de la ville d’Esch tombés au champ d’honneur sous le drapeau français*” (In memory of the volunteers from the city of Esch who died at the field of honour under the French flag) with the names of the seven men listed below (Figure 9-9). For its location, it was decided to mount the plaque on a wall on the first floor of the town hall, at the entrance of the secretariat.⁶⁸⁶ This choice of location has as consequence that only people entering the town hall, and continuing to the first floor, would see this plaque. The plaque would certainly not attract the same attention if it had been mounted on a wall next to the main entrance or even on an outer wall of the town hall. As will be reviewed in section 9.4.3, this likely explains the decision to relocate the plaque many decades later.

9.4.2 Inauguration

The inaugural event for the memorial plaque listing the seven fallen *légionnaires* from Esch occurred on 14th July 1923, attended by family members of the fallen *légionnaires*, around 30 comrades in arms from the *Amicale de Luxembourg*, the presidents of the *Alliance Française* and *Alliance franco-luxembourgeoise* together with representatives of the French Army, as French troops were still stationed in Luxembourg at the time.⁶⁸⁷ There is no doubt that this chosen date for the inauguration was deliberate as it is the same day as France’s national holiday. As with so many other WWI memorials in Luxembourg, the French connotation is as clear as day and plays into the post-war narrative.

⁶⁸⁴ *L’Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 49. Jg., n° 264/265 (08.11.1919), p. 1.

⁶⁸⁵ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 190.

⁶⁸⁶ *L’Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 53. Jg., n° 198 (17.07.1923), p. 3.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

The speeches held on this day captured the intention behind this plaque. In the speech given by the secretary of the *Aide aux Légionnaires*, Paul Flesch, the heroism of the 28 brave men from Esch who enlisted was accentuated. As the seven fallen *légionnaires* have no known graves for their families and friends to visit, it was thus the *Aide aux Légionnaires* and the municipal administration of Esch who took care that their names were transmitted as an example to posterity and as a mark of admiration, as pointed out by Flesch.⁶⁸⁸

Covered by the Luxembourgish national flag, the plaque was also finely decorated with bundles of the Allied flags for this occasion. The troops presented their arms and at each of the seven names, former *légionnaire* Lecharlier, whose brother appears on the plaque, pronounced the words “*Tombé au champ d'honneur*” (Fallen at the field of honour). All in all, the inauguration was described as an extremely moving event which brought many people present to tears. The custody of the plaque was handed over to the municipality of Esch.⁶⁸⁹

Over the following decades, no further mentions of the plaque in the newspapers consulted could be found except for a commemorative event held in 1968, marking 50 years since the end of WWI. This remembrance service was held in memory of the victims of WWI, commencing with a church service at *Église du Sacre Coeur*. This was followed by the laying down of a wreath at the *Monument aux Morts* for WWII in front of the *Musée National de la Résistance* by a representative of the municipality on behalf of all participants. The event concluded with the laying of a wreath at the plaque at the town hall.⁶⁹⁰ Yet the plaque was not to remain at the town hall, and as other WWI memorials examined in this thesis, it also faced a relocation.

9.4.3 Relocation

The plaque for the *légionnaires* of Esch is the only WWI memorial listed in this thesis that could not be visited at its current location in person. Nevertheless, I had an unexpected encounter with this plaque while visiting the temporary

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁰ *Luxemburger Wort*, 121. Jg., n° 307/308 (02.11.1968), p. 9.

exhibition titled “*Légionnaires*” at the *Musée Dräi Eechelen* in September 2021. It was at this exhibition where I first learned about the existence of this plaque. The catalogue of the exhibition only makes brief mention of the plaque but still notes its relocation from the town hall to the *Musée National de la Résistance*⁶⁹¹ in Esch, however, without providing any more details.⁶⁹²

When visiting the *Musée National de la Résistance* a year later in summer 2022 expecting to find the plaque among the exhibits there after having returned from the temporary exhibition, I was informed by the museum staff that the plaque is currently not on display. At that time, the plaque was stored within their archive for an indefinite time, also because the museum was still being partially refurbished with only one section of the museum open to visitors. A follow-up conversation revealed that it is not fully known why and when the plaque was moved from the town hall to the museum as to their knowledge no paper trail of this decision exists. Considering that the museum opened in 1956, but with the plaque still being at the town hall during the 50th anniversary of the Armistice in 1968, the plaque was relocated at some point after that event.

Speculating about the reasons behind this relocation, the museum staff assumed it could be something as simple as the walls within the town hall needing to be repainted, therefore having to demount the plaque to carry out this work but then deciding to move it to the museum. It remained on display at the museum for several years, but its placement seemed rather arbitrary. This plaque for the fallen *légionnaires* was positioned among panels relating to Luxembourgers held captive at concentration camps during WWII. Being the only WWI exhibit at a museum dedicated to the theme of resistance with a main focus on WWII, the plaque was surely completely out of place, with no connection to the rest of the museum. It was therefore decided some years ago to take the plaque down and it has since been placed in the archive, apart from featuring at the exhibition “*Légionnaires*”.⁶⁹³ After contacting the *Departement Patrimoine Historique et Industriel* of the city of Esch, the speculation about the reason behind the plaque’s relocation was supported even though no official written records of this

⁶⁹¹ Also known under its renamed title *Musée de la Résistance et des Droit humains*.

⁶⁹² Camarda, S. (2020), p. 190.

⁶⁹³ As per communication with the museum staff.

decision-making process could be found. It was confirmed that the first floor of the town hall was under renovation between 2004 and 2005, which would place the plaque's relocation to the museum within that timeframe. It is theorised that the removal of the plaque was because the first floor of the town hall was not as accessible, and the plaque would therefore be better suited within the museum.

Why it was decided to mount the plaque within the museum rather than outside the museum, even close to the *WWII Monument aux Morts* remains however unanswered. Placing it at a more prominent and visible location on the outer walls of the museum, or even outside the town hall, would have as effect that the plaque would be known to a wider audience. Being positioned within the museum, as it was the case for several years, had as consequence that only visitors to the museum would see the plaque, even having to pay an entrance fee. With its current location within the museum's archive, the plaque is at risk of being completely forgotten.

9.4.4 Conclusion

The plaque dedicated to the fallen *légionnaires* of Esch is yet another poignant example of a WWI plaque being moved to a different location. Although briefly mentioned in the accompanying catalogue of the exhibition "*Légionnaires*" informing readers of this change of location, no details about the reason or date are provided. Even though the staff at the museum and the *Département Patrimoine Historique et Industriel* were able to share some information, no other written records could be found as to exactly why or when this change of location happened, leaving much to speculation, and educated guesses. Notwithstanding, this plaque needs to be included in these case studies as it is quite unique among the WWI plaques within Luxembourg, transforming from an active memorial plaque into heritage due to its current placement within a museum. At the moment of writing, the *Musée National de la Résistance* is again temporarily closed due to ongoing reorganisation and installation of the displays of the permanent exhibition. Whether or not the plaque will again make a public reappearance, either within this museum or elsewhere, or continue to collect dust in the archive, remains to be seen.

9.5 Differdange



Figure 9-10 Memorial plaque for Alfred Furgerot at the cemetery of Differdange, August 2021
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9.5.1 Second Lieutenant Marius Lautiron and Corporal Alfred Furgerot

On the night of the 9th to 10th February 1917, a French airplane was shot down over Differdange, an industrial town in the south of Luxembourg, crashing into *Rue des Jardins* and killing both aviators, Second Lieutenant Marius Lautiron and Corporal Alfred Furgerot. They had previously attacked a steel plant in Esch, dropping two bombs but no damage or casualties were reported.⁶⁹⁴ Their burial took place on 12th February, with German soldiers leading the funeral procession

⁶⁹⁴ *Luxemburger Wort*, 70. Jg., n° 43 (12.02.1917), p. 3; Logelin-Simon, A. (1990) *Déifferdang am Éische Weltkriech: eng Konferenz, gehalen zu Déifferdang, den 30. März 1990*. Lëtzebuerg: Archives nationales, pp. 63-64.

and the streets lined by large crowds of locals.⁶⁹⁵ Both aviators were initially buried in Differdange before being exhumed and repatriated on 31st March 1922.⁶⁹⁶ A memorial plaque at the cemetery of Differdange remembers this incident and features on the interactive map of the digital WWI exhibition. However, in this case, the interactive map provides some inaccuracy on the memorial, as seen in Figure 9-11.

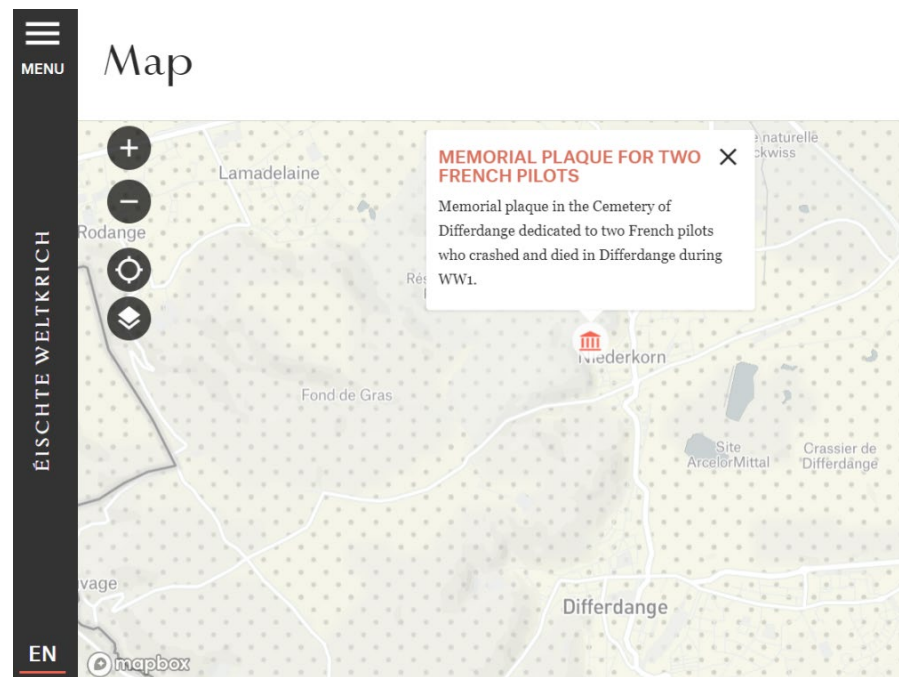


Figure 9-11 Detail of interactive map regarding the memorial plaque in Differdange
Source: ww1.lu (Éischte Weltkrich)

Firstly, the interactive map incorrectly places the plaque approximately 2.5 km north at the cemetery of neighbouring town Niederborn rather than at the cemetery of Differdange. Secondly, the interactive map informs that this plaque is dedicated to two French pilots; however, as visible in Figure 9-10, the plaque only names Alfred Furgerot. Which bears the question as to why only one pilot is being commemorated and what happened to Second Lieutenant Marius Lautiron?

The first error was easily rectified through a physical visit to the cemetery in Differdange while carrying out the phenomenological survey (see 9.5.3), while the second inaccuracy required further research into the background of the

⁶⁹⁵ *Luxemburger Wort*, 70. Jg., n° 44 (13.02.1917), p. 3.

⁶⁹⁶ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 50. Jg., n° 330 (25.11.1920), p. 2; *Escher Tageblatt*, n° 77 (01.04.1922), p. 7.

memorial plaque, thereby also allowing to add to the plaque's rather fragmented biography.

The journal *La Guerre Aérienne Illustrée* features an article on Lautiron and his career; however, as the article is from summer 1917, it only provides information up to his death and initial burial.⁶⁹⁷ Nonetheless, a more recent article in *Luxemburger Wort*, to mark the centenary of this event in 2017, notes that the whereabouts of the plaque for Marius Lautiron are not known, thereby suggesting that a separate plaque for Lautiron indeed existed.⁶⁹⁸

With regard to the plaque for Alfred Furgerot, mounted at the back wall at the cemetery of Differdange, it remains unknown when the plaque was erected. Judging by the design of the plaque and inscription and being almost completely surrounded by ivy as observed during my fieldwork (see 9.5.3), it can be theorised that the plaque dates from the interwar period and has been at this site for a few decades. However, as the plaque reads “*Reconnaissance à la ville de Differdange*” (Recognition to the city of Differdange), it can be implied that the plaque was likely not an initiative by the locals or municipality but rather given to the city of Differdange by a third party, although no evidence of this could be found. Hence, it is possible that the plaque was gifted by either Furgerot's family or community, or even by *Le Souvenir Français* or similar associations, making this plaque much more transnational in character. Even after contacting the local council and a local historian, no further details could be gained.

9.5.2 Supporting the post-war narrative?

Despite one plaque missing, the fact that French aviators are being commemorated this way is noteworthy, considering that at this stage of the war Luxembourg still proclaimed itself as neutral with the narrative of unjust bombardment prevalent, and that France regarded Luxembourg as enemy territory, bombarding the country on numerous occasions, even on the night of the plane crash. The attitude of the locals towards France is, however, put

⁶⁹⁷ Le Breton (1917) Le Sous-Lieutenant Lautiron. *La Guerre Aérienne Illustrée*, n° 39, 9 August, pp. 623-624.

⁶⁹⁸ Leyder, H. (2017) Vom Differdinger Himmel geholt. *Luxemburger Wort*, 169. Jg., n° 39, 15 February, p. 28.

forward by Armand Logelin-Simon who described how the city of Differdange was immediately in mourning, irrespective of Luxembourg's proclaimed neutrality, to emphasise on whose side Luxembourg truly was.⁶⁹⁹

This attitude is further highlighted in an article in *Luxemburger Wort* from 10th February 1977 to mark the 60th anniversary, including details and photographs of the plane crash and funeral processions. The article reads how there has never been a more moving ceremony of fraternal tenderness than that of the funeral of the two French aviators, attended by a large crowd. The article stressed Luxembourg's patriotism and sympathy towards France, such as through wreaths with the inscription "*Aux héros français*".⁷⁰⁰ While the solemn mourning for the two French aviators as expressed by the locals is not being questioned here, in hindsight, it can be argued that the comments above aid once more in supporting the amplified post-war narrative of Luxembourg being one of the Allies through the act of honouring their neighbours and friends who died within their territory, despite being bombarded the very same night.

The decision to raise memorial plaques for French aviators is further thought-provoking when also eight civilians from Differdange were killed during the aerial bombardments between 1916 and 1918, and to whom no known separate memorial has been dedicated to this day. Logelin-Simon reported on the bombings of Differdange in considerable detail, even including the names of the civilian deaths.⁷⁰¹ Even so, it seems largely absent from the city's collective memory as there are no physical reminders of it.

On the contrary, the 60th anniversary of the death of Lautiron and Furgerot was not only marked by the above-mentioned article in *Luxemburger Wort*, but by an additional commemorative event on 13th February 1977. Organised by *Le Souvenir Français* to honour both pilots and to get the younger generation involved in maintaining their memory, a mass was held, and flowers laid down at the *Monument de l'Évasion*.⁷⁰² There are two interesting observations to be

⁶⁹⁹ Logelin-Simon, A. (1990), p. 64.

⁷⁰⁰ Dollard, J. (1977). La dernière mission d'un «Farman» sur Differdange en 1917. *Luxemburger Wort*, 130. Jg., n° 34, 10 February, pp. 9-10.

⁷⁰¹ Logelin-Simon, A. (1990), pp. 51-55.

⁷⁰² *Luxemburger Wort*, 130. Jg., n° 42 (19.02.1977), p. 21.

made here: firstly, the involvement of *Le Souvenir Français* - understandable as both pilots are French - but it also again underlines this Franco-Luxembourgish connotation and link; and secondly that the *Monument de l'Évasion* is associated with WWII and no comment of the memorial plaque itself is made in the newspapers. Assuming that the plaque already existed in 1977 given its dated style, there are two possible explanations as to why the commemorative event did not take place at the cemetery in front of the plaque: either the location was not deemed suitable for such an event, or the plaque was already hidden by the ivy and seemingly forgotten. The latter explanation is very plausible, as a local historian, with whom I corresponded, commented that the plaque was obscured by the ivy for a long time. The ivy also left a significant impression during the phenomenological exercise to be discussed below.

9.5.3 Phenomenological survey results

The cemetery in Differdange itself is signposted and easy to find; however, the plaque is not. Through preliminary research, it was already confirmed that the plaque is mounted at the back wall of the cemetery in Differdange. Even with this knowledge, it still took me several minutes to find the plaque given the size of the cemetery. I entered via the main entrance, checking for any signposts, but to no avail. As I walked towards the middle of the cemetery a large monument quickly became visible at the back wall, but this monument is dedicated to WWII resistance fighters.

After first scouting the back wall left of this WWII memorial before searching the right side, I finally spotted the plaque after almost walking past it given its small size and being slightly hidden by the ivy growing on the cemetery wall, especially when coming from the direction of the WWII monument. A big pile of gravel in front of the plaque further makes this spot an unlikely memorial space and thus easily overlooked (Figure 9-12).



Figure 9-12 View as if approaching from the WWII memorial, August 2021
© Laura Zenner

This setting immediately had a big impact on my initial perception and experience as an observer. The pile of gravel might be the opposite of the embodiment of a memorial space and suggests the little importance given to this memorial site, even neglecting it. While the ivy plants around the plaque can be considered to create a more picturesque atmosphere, they also camouflage the plaque, even if this is accidental and just a natural result of the passing of time. It must be noted that this visit occurred during summer. The ivy plants will therefore not have the same impact during the colder months and the plaque should be better visible. It can be assumed that the groundskeeper of the cemetery occasionally cuts back the ivy to avoid the plaque from disappearing completely, on the other hand not clearing away the pile of gravel.

The plaque itself is clean and well maintained. As reported in the 2017 article, local history group *Déifferdenger Geschichtsfrënn* had restored the plaque for the occasion of the centenary, seeing it crucial not to forget such a memorable event of the past.⁷⁰³ Unfortunately, during my research it was not possible to contact the *Déifferdenger Geschichtsfrënn* to potentially get further information on the plaque due to their temporarily closure and break from activities, and the renovation of their office space.

The plaque's inscription provides very limited information about the incident and people involved. Apart from the name of Corporal Alfred Furgerot, his death year 1917 and his hometown, no further information about this person or incident is given. Only the date of 1917 suggests any correlation with WWI. The plaque and inscription were best visible when standing straight in front of it and when approached from the right entrance of the cemetery, from which a path is leading right up to the memorial (Figure 9-13). Yet, given its small size, the pile of gravel and the thick vegetation around it, the plaque only becomes noticeable and the inscription readable from up close. A certain distance between the observer and the plaque remains due to the gravel which cannot be easily passed.

As with many of the Luxembourgish war memorials situated at cemeteries or on church grounds, the atmosphere is one of peace, reflection, and mourning. With no busy roads close by, there are no major noise distractions affecting the quiet atmosphere, apart from the occasional train passing by in the distance. However, the unfortunate fact of the gravel dumped in front of the plaque takes away from its commemorative aspect and makes it appear underwhelming. The WWI plaque stands in stark contrast to the WWII only a few metres away, in both size and importance. While the resistance fighters who were executed by the Nazis were local men and women, it is only logical that a memorial plaque dedicated to a French WWI pilot pales in comparison.

⁷⁰³ Leyder, H. (2017), p. 28.



Figure 9-13 View of the plaque walking up the path from right entrance of cemetery, August 2021
© Laura Zenner



Figure 9-14 Memorial plaque with gravel and shovel, August 2022
© Laura Zenner

This memorial plaque was one of the few that I decided to revisit again the following year. The reason for this second visit was simply to find out whether or not the pile of gravel was a one-off occasion or a more permanent feature of the memorial space. When visiting the plaque again in summer 2022, the pile of gravel was still there, although smaller (Figure 9-14). The shovel stuck in the pile of gravel indicates its use to likely redo the footpaths of the cemetery from time to time, as it must have been the case in summer 2022. Another observation from my second visit was that the ivy was more neatly trimmed compared to the previous year; however, it was simultaneously encroaching around the plaque even further.

9.5.4 Conclusion

While the events of the night from 9th to 10th February 1917 and the deaths of Lautiron and Furgerot were remembered in 1977 and then again in 2017, indicating that this historical event has not been forgotten, the plaque itself is not referenced in any other secondary sources consulted during this research, apart from the online interactive map. Correspondence with the local council and a local historian did also not reveal more details about the plaque. Consequently, the plaque at Differdange currently presents an incomplete biography missing a definite starting point, or information about its inception, initiators and inauguration, leaving much to speculations, but also room for follow-up research to fill these gaps.

Looking at it from a modern-day perspective, the memorial plaque at Differdange counts among the less significant and almost overlooked and forgotten memorials of WWI. Apart from those visiting the graves next to this plaque, not many people would take notice of it due to it being located at the far back of the cemetery, its small size, almost being camouflaged by ivy, with gravel in front of it and not visible from afar or signposted. This fact was also confirmed by a close friend of mine, who has visited their family grave at the lower section of this cemetery many times without ever noticing this memorial plaque.

9.6 Chapter summary

A clear dominance of the *légionnaires*, as well as the bond between Luxembourg and France in the case of Differdange, are evident in the analysis of the selected memorial plaques for this thesis. With three of the four plaques definitely created during the interwar period, they support the general theory that Luxembourg's WWI memorialisation is anchored in the post-war narrative and illustrate through the sacrifice of the *légionnaires* that Luxembourg participated as one of the Allies in the conflict. Considering the other memorial plaques not covered in this chapter but listed in the inventory, similar themes are present, be that in connection to the *légionnaires* (the plaque in Hamm), to France (the medal of honour situated at the *Hôtel de Ville* in Luxembourg City) or even to the US soldiers who died in Luxembourg during their short presence after WWI having sacrificed their life for Luxembourg (as inscribed on the plaque in Walferdange) and, like their French allies, are commonly regarded as liberators.

Moreover, three of the four plaques examined in this chapter are marked by relocation, and in the case of Faber's plaque even two relocations. Naturally, it is easier to relocate a memorial plaque given its smaller size than a larger monument, but each relocation entails consequences which have so far barely been acknowledged or critically evaluated in other sources consulted for this thesis. As demonstrated through additional research and my own observations made during the phenomenological survey, a relocation can either be beneficial, but can equally be disadvantageous, the case of the plaque in Esch being a prime example. Memorial plaques are already relatively small war memorials. Their placement within the public domain is therefore crucial when considering their visibility, accessibility, and awareness, as they might otherwise run the risk of being overlooked or forgotten.

Chapter 10 Discussion

10.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and reflects on the main aims, questions, and results which my PhD research sought to address and answer. While the previous chapters focused on individual case studies and primarily attempted to construct biographies of these selected memorials, this chapter will consider wider themes drawing from these case studies but also look at the wider results of this research. To do this, the compiled inventory of WWI memorials in Luxembourg (Appendix 1) which includes memorials not discussed in detail due to the scope of this thesis, and in conjunction with the location maps (Appendix 2), will also be addressed.

Questions and results on the themes, trends, and evolution of Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI will be reviewed and interpreted. Particular attention will be paid to how the post-war narrative is not only mirrored in Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI, but how these memorials have helped to disseminate this narrative to the point that it remained uncontested for decades. Elsewhere it has been noted that the fragmented historiography, coupled with a lack of interest by academia but also the general public into this era of Luxembourg's past until recently, is partially responsible for the propagation of a narrative that tells a slightly different version of events, and places Luxembourg on the side of the Allies. The memorials, functioning as visible and physical reminders of the past, have certainly also contributed to this.

Finally, this chapter also reviews the methodology used for this thesis, considering whether or not this is an appropriate and valid approach producing meaningful results for the study of war memorials and to aid the construction of their biographies, including their most recent chapter, so far not explicitly attempted.

10.2 Inventory and location maps

The main reason and advantage of compiling an inventory of all known WWI memorials in Luxembourg is the easier and comprehensive listing and visualisation of the different types of memorials by also providing photographic evidence. Information about location, style, date (if known), additions or other changes, as well as notes on maintenance and current state in form of short summaries from the observations made during the phenomenological survey further aid the analysis of Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI.

In terms of location and spatial organisation of all identified WWI memorials, the inventory contains the GPS coordinates as close to the precise location as possible. With these coordinates, two separate maps were created; one of Luxembourg City, where many of the WWI memorials can be found, and another of the whole country to show the remaining WWI memorials. The map of Luxembourg City also contains the different WWI commemorative street names. Being the most comprehensive location maps of WWI memorials in Luxembourg produced to date, both maps facilitate the visualisation of the memorials' locations and thereby the spatial distribution and relationship to each other.

The interactive map of the digitalised exhibition "*Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*" is an essential and useful resource for the identification and location of WWI memorials in Luxembourg. This map includes a total of nine memorials; however, as evidenced by my own inventory and location maps, the number of WWI memorials goes well beyond that number, especially when also considering the WWI street names. Even though this interactive map provides some useful information on their location, two out of nine memorials are in fact pinpointed incorrectly on the map. These small inaccuracies highlight once again that first-hand visits to memorial sites, in the case of my research because of the phenomenological surveys, proved beneficial in validating or correcting data from existing sources. The interactive map could hence benefit from these corrections and re-examination to also include the additional memorials identified during my research.

Moreover, having a comprehensive inventory to accompany the case studies allows researchers to further evaluate, interpret, and contrast the identified WWI memorials in Luxembourg. This can be exemplified by looking at the data gathered for the different memorial plaques, from the case studies in Chapter 9 and inventory. A total of seven WWI memorials can be classified as memorial plaques and can be found in Differdange, Walferdange, Tétange, Esch-sur-Alzette, and Luxembourg City. Six of the seven plaques are dedicated to fallen soldiers having died either during or shortly after the conflict. The nationality of these soldiers varies from Luxembourgish to French and American. Two of these plaques are located within a cemetery, one in a public park, one attached to a wayside cross, another inside a museum, and the last one is mounted on the gable of a primary school. The seventh plaque, located inside the *Hôtel de Ville de Luxembourg* (city hall of Luxembourg City), is dedicated to the city rather than individual people, and serves a dual function as memorial plaque as well as medal of honour awarded by France.

The different locations of these plaques, and indeed their accessibility and visibility within the public domain as observed during the phenomenological survey, demonstrate the varying nature of memorial sites and their impact, importance and meaning. As two of the plaques are situated inside a museum and a municipal building, they are not accessible or visible unless for people frequenting these places. The part of the *Hôtel de Ville de Luxembourg* where the plaque with the medal of honour is situated (entrance for *Archives de la Ville de Luxembourg*) is not an area that any person can simply enter, having to be buzzed in by the staff members. Especially in the case of the memorial plaque in Esch, which according to the museum staff is at the time of writing stored in their archive, it is not readily available for the general public unlike those plaques placed in a park or outside a school. Even though the plaques located at cemeteries (in Differdange and Walferdange) are at public places that people can visit, it can be assumed that only those frequenting that corner of the cemetery might be aware of these plaques, usually small in size and thus easily overlooked.

The creation of the inventory and location maps also highlight the difficulties encountered during this research, mainly in connection with the identification,

localisation and dating of the WWI memorials. The lack of available sources, in particular for smaller and less-known memorials, was one of the main challenges of this research but once again emphasise how little research has been done into the memorialisation of WWI in Luxembourg. This also led to two of the memorials (in Ettelbruck and Bascharage) only being discovered at a much later stage during this research. It is very likely that other smaller local WWI memorials, either on their own or in conjunction with WWII, exist in Luxembourg which could not be identified during this research. The inventory created for this thesis, and by extension the maps, are therefore by no means definitive; however, and for lack of any other official comprehensive inventories of Luxembourgish WWI memorials to date, my inventory can serve as a basis to be expanded and upon which more research can be built in the future.

10.3 Narrative

The aim of this PhD thesis is to assess how WWI has been memorialised in Luxembourg, in the interwar period and later. Particular attention has been paid to which narrative the various WWI memorials convey and whether they encourage us not only to remember, but to remember in a certain way. Just as so many other war memorials all around the world, most of the WWI memorials in Luxembourg also serve a purpose that goes beyond them being a locus for collective grief, thereby pointing towards the political aspect of the memorialisation process.

Chapter 4 presented two main narratives of WWI that partially coexisted and overlapped during and after the war: the first described Luxembourg as a neutral and passive victim, always sitting in the waiting room of war, falling victim to unjust bombardment; the second painted Luxembourg as one of the Allies with 3,000 volunteers joining the *Légion étrangère*. It is particularly the latter narrative which, by means of the influence of the Francophile community and associations in Luxembourg, and the politicisation, myth-building, or even romanticisation of the *légionnaires*, grew in significance and dominated over the former in the aftermath of the war. This was a time when Luxembourg's political, diplomatic, and economic future was hanging by a thread. The double referendum of 1919, severing all ties with Germany, and Luxembourg's economic

reorientation, certainly played an important role during this turbulent time. However, as demonstrated through the case studies, this post-war narrative is further mirrored and materialised in Luxembourg's memorialisation. This becomes evident not just by identifying some of the initiators, such as the Luxembourgish division of *Le Souvenir Français*, but is also manifested in the designs, symbols, and language (see 10.4 for details).

Additionally, the case studies have illustrated and validated that memorialisation, as much as other commemorative events or practices, can shape and even re-shape the narrative of historical events. Through tangible, visual, but equally emotional and politically loaded reminders, Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI has undoubtedly played a critical role in propagating the post-war narrative securing Luxembourg a place among the Allies which it did in fact not hold. Through this, the memorials and the message they convey shift the focus away from a more accurate version of the past containing some inconvenient truths about Luxembourg's ambiguous neutrality, all the while amending and exaggerating other elements of Luxembourg's participation in WWI, in particular in relation to the *légionnaires* and the aerial attacks.

10.4 Remembering and Forgetting

There is no doubt that war memorialisation and commemoration can be highly selective, especially when myth-building is involved, and to support and circulate a certain narrative of the past. But as pointed out by Charles Turner, “where something is explicitly remembered something else is implicitly or explicitly forgotten.”⁷⁰⁴ This implies that the line between remembering and forgetting, or between memory and amnesia is a thin one. This selective character of war remembrance, and the thin line of collective memory and collective amnesia can equally be observed clearly when looking at how WWI has been memorialised in Luxembourg. Not only are the war memorials selective in what or who they remember, but the war memorials are also selective in how they commemorate.

⁷⁰⁴ Turner, C. (2006), p. 206.

The first type of this selective memorialisation process becomes noticeable when considering that the vast majority of WWI memorials in Luxembourg, be that from the interwar period or later, either explicitly or implicitly commemorate very specific groups of people, namely the *légionnaires* and the Allies, in particular the French. The only known example of a memorial to the German soldiers who died on Luxembourgish soil can neither be considered a national nor local initiative. The *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof Clausen* where these German WWI soldiers were buried, and others relocated there in the 1920s, was established by the former Prussian garrison and was later in the custodianship of the *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge*. The granite crosses and name plaques that were added at a later stage can thus be interpreted as ‘foreign’ WWI memorials within Luxembourg. A collective and transnational memorial for all foreign soldiers who died in Luxembourg, an idea that was born while the war was still raging on and announced in a newspaper article from 1915 (Chapter 7), never materialised.

Apart from the German WWI soldiers, who obviously were the ‘enemies’, there is another group of people that is not represented in the memorialisation and commemoration of WWI in Luxembourg, but which could be considered victims of the war: those of Luxembourgish descent drafted into the Imperial German Army or *Heeresarbeit*. Although fewer in number and often drafted because of their German ancestry or for being considered stateless after having lived on German territory for years, these men are completely excluded from the *Monument du Souvenir* or any other WWI memorial in Luxembourg. Considering that most of these men were forced or coerced rather than volunteered, it is quite surprising that not a single monument or plaque remembers them even today, as it might actually have enhanced the narratives of victimhood and being one of the Allies even more.

While their numbers were nowhere near the mass of Luxembourgish youths forcibly conscripted into the Wehrmacht during WWII, and with limited information available on their fates, the term *enrôlement forcé* - commonly associated with WWII and the forced conscription - was nevertheless already used during WWI and the interbellum to refer to those drafted into the Imperial

German Army.⁷⁰⁵ Even post-WWII, when associations, memorials and commemorative services were directed towards the *enrolés de force* from WWII, those from WWI were not included or mentioned. It can be speculated that because the majority of these Luxembourgers who were drafted into the Imperial German Army in WWI lived outside Luxembourg, that no attempts were made within its borders to publicly remember them. Their exclusion from Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI might have also been deliberate to completely distance Luxembourg from Germany even further at that time. Whatever the reason, this small group of people remains, at least from a public memorialisation point of view, unremembered.

Another group for which no explicit public memorial could be identified during this research, are the few Luxembourgers involved in the spy networks, such as Lise Rischart. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the activities of these spy networks can be considered a secret and forgotten war. With very few secondary sources about this aspect of the war, a memorial plaque for these people might also help to move this small yet important chapter of Luxembourg during WWI out of obscurity. Considering that these spies operated for the Allies, though small in number, and can be seen as a group of resistance, it is surprising that this has not been more utilised and emphasised through memorialisation and commemoration, aside from some members of the spy networks being awarded the *Croix de guerre* in the interbellum.⁷⁰⁶

Thus, when assessing war memorials and how they may support a particular narrative, rather than only evaluating the visible, the invisible should also be considered. Likewise, attention should be paid to what has been omitted from the existing memorials. This leads us to the second type of this selective process: how, or in which way, WWI has been memorialised. This is perhaps less obvious at first glance yet becomes particular evident when analysing the language that was used for the inscriptions but also in speeches during inaugural events or in corresponding newspaper reports.

⁷⁰⁵ Elcheroth, L. (2015), pp. 45-46.

⁷⁰⁶ C²DH (2018) *Éischte Weltkrich: Remembering the Great War in Luxembourg*.

The first observation in relation to language is that there is a clear dominance of the French language for the inscription on WWI memorials, with only two of the identified memorials in Luxembourgish; in Fischbach (2013) and Mensdorf (1958), both joint memorials for WWI and WWII. The only known WWI memorial in English relates to the US troops who died in Luxembourg and is thought to date from the 1980s. There are also two memorials in German. The first is obviously the *Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof Clausen*, while the second WWI memorial with a German inscription can be found close to Remerschen just next to the Luxembourg-Germany border. This trend of using French for inscriptions is, however, not just reserved to WWI. Sonja Kmec comments in a short article on the memorials of Luxembourg City, ranging from sixteenth to twenty-first century, that over half have an inscription wholly or partially in French. This is followed by Luxembourgish, then Latin (often in connection to religious monuments), and finally also English and German.⁷⁰⁷

French was clearly the preferred language for memorial inscriptions in the interwar period but remained popular also after WWII for the multiple *Monuments aux Morts* scattered all over the country. Kmec draws attention to the evolution of the use of languages for the memorials in the capital. While Luxembourgish was already used in the early twentieth century for monuments dedicated to national authors, the native language only surpassed French in the 1930s - the decade Luxembourg celebrate the centenary of its independence - and again in the 1970s. English only started to make an appearance for inscriptions since the 1960s onwards, and in general linked to WWII memorials, considering the presence of US troops in Luxembourg after the liberation on 10th September 1944 and during the Battle of the Bulge (1944-1945).⁷⁰⁸

Since Luxembourgish was already used for monuments pre-dating WWI, why was Luxembourgish, as the national language and during a time when the national identity started to grow, not also used for WWI memorials? Kmec suggests that the choice of language for any memorial is determined both by the aim of ensuring the inscriptions can be understood by the greatest number of passers-by, and also by the linguistic affinities of these memorials' initiators, as well as

⁷⁰⁷ Kmec, S. (2009), pp. 44-45.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

those of the targeted community.⁷⁰⁹ Applying this reasoning to WWI memorials from the interwar period, there was certainly a clear influence of Francophiles, and the French language was - and is to this day - widely spoken and understood in Luxembourg, being one of its official languages. However, rather than being only intended to address the Luxembourgish people, this dominance of French could also be interpreted as addressing people outside of Luxembourg, in particular from France and Belgium, Luxembourg's claimed allies. It could be argued that using French rather than Luxembourgish not only facilitated more people to read and understand the inscriptions, but also allowed Luxembourg to be identified from the outside as one of the Allies just by the inscriptions on its WWI memorials.

To add to the narrative and myth-building, the language, and expressions to refer to the Allies, which has been repeated in primary and secondary literature in the decades that followed, also needs to be considered. The word 'liberator' to refer to the French and US troops can be found over and over again. However, there is a substantial problem with this word because Luxembourg was in fact not liberated during WWI. The war ended with the signing of the Armistice on 11th November 1918. The German troops started to retreat shortly after, with the French and US troops only arriving some days after the war had already ended, temporarily occupying the country. There was no attempt made to liberate Luxembourg before 11th November 1918 and yet the Allies are remembered as liberators rather than occupiers. This can thus be seen as yet another opportunity to reinforce the post-war narrative.

Furthermore, it has been noted that the inscription for the tomb of the unknown *légionnaire* echoes the inscription for the one under the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris, thereby stressing the Franco-Luxembourgish character of the memorial. But by using the word *légionnaire* rather than the term *soldat*, it not only excludes other Luxembourgers who fought for the Allies, or even those drafted into the Imperial German Army, but it also excludes anyone from subsequent wars. This might be a reason why the tomb is no longer part of the official programme for *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale* in the capital, as this

⁷⁰⁹ Kmec, S. (2009), p. 45.

link to the *légionnaires* might no longer be deemed as relevant from a national perspective in the twenty-first century.

With regard to Clausen and Bonnevoie, the speeches at the inaugurations use expressions which clearly put the whole blame for the air raids on the presence of the German troops, even using terms such as ‘barbarism’, even though the narrative of unjust bombardment by the Allies existed while the war was still raging on.⁷¹⁰ While their presence was certainly a prime reason and justification for the Allies to bombard what they viewed as enemy territory, any mention that this was also because of Luxembourg’s ambiguous neutrality and direct or indirect involvement in Germany’s war machinery was omitted. More importantly, when looking at the inscriptions on both monuments, these bombs appear to have no originator.

As highlighted in Chapter 8, and supported by Denis Scuto in relation to Clausen, it can be claimed that this omission might have been intentional, to support the post-war narrative once again and even not to make any unnecessary accusations during a time when Luxembourg sought to mend international and diplomatic relationships.⁷¹¹ Without any background knowledge of what happened in Clausen or Bonnevoie, it can be assumed that anyone walking past these monuments and reading the inscriptions would not know what the circumstances were behind these attacks and that they were carried out by the Allies. These memorials are therefore visual reminders of the post-war narrative, a modified version of events. They also serve as evidence that while certain aspects of the war are being remembered, others are purposefully omitted and made to be forgotten. This is not to propose changing the memorials or their inscriptions which allude to a different historical narrative, as these are also part of Luxembourg’s history, cultural heritage, and landscape. But it is important to reflect on the existing memorials and be more conscious and judicious about what or who they remember, in which way and also what is excluded or omitted.

⁷¹⁰ Camarda, S. (2020), p. 189.

⁷¹¹ See interview videos with Denis Scuto: Fick, M. (2018) «La Première Guerre mondiale est traitée comme une petite guerre» au Luxembourg. *Virgule*, 8 November.

At this point it should also be remembered that the monuments in Bonnevoie and Clausen are the only known examples commemorating the civilian victims killed during the air raids of 1914-1918. As these were local civic initiatives by the respective neighbourhoods of Clausen-Neudorf and Hollerich-Bonnevoie, in each case listing the names of the victims, these two memorials cannot be viewed as representative for the remaining victims. With Bonnevoie commemorating 17 and Clausen commemorating 10 victims, the remaining civilian victims do not have a memorial, or even a plaque to remind people of their deaths. Even a hundred years on, there exists no national memorial for all civilian victims from WWI, including those who might have died due to causes other than the air attacks.

10.5 The life-stories and ‘shelf-life’ of a war memorial

Revisiting Winter’s concept that war memorials have a ‘shelf-life’, hence losing their meaning over time, or Huyssen’s connotation that war memorials are always built on quicksand and therefore at the risk of being forgotten or turning invisible (see Chapter 2), the WWI memorials in Luxembourg both support and refute these notions.

Considering the little academic attention given to these memorials on a national level and the lack of a comprehensive inventory or list prior to my research, it is generally true that many of the smaller and local memorials seem to run the risk of being overlooked. During my research, this became especially apparent by the often-encountered difficulties in gathering information on these smaller memorials. More than once, details on either the date of inauguration, initiators, or even the decisions for relocation, such as the plaque in Esch, could not be obtained, as little to no official records of these decision-making processes seem to have been recorded or kept, leaving much to speculation and educated guesses after piecing together different clues from newspaper articles and correspondence with local authorities, historians, archives, and museums.

There are a number of WWI memorials that seem to have lost their importance and standing over the course of the past hundred years. This might be because they are situated in less noticeable locations, and often at cemeteries, thereby

likely only known to locals frequenting these places. Similarly, others have become completely overshadowed by WWII memorials which are either located at more visible places or which visually and metaphorically dominate over smaller WWI memorials by their sheer size and attributed importance. The memorial plaque in Tétange is a prime example of this dwarfing in size in significance regarding war memorialisation in Luxembourg. However, the most compelling example is probably the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre* and the *Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu*. Despite its considerable size, this memorial seems to have somewhat lost in momentousness and meaning on a national level, especially in more recent decades. As a memorial solely associated to WWI, it is now no longer part of the official ceremony programme on *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale*. This change in status is also evident by the fact that myself, and some friends and family members I have asked, had never heard of this memorial.

Nonetheless, even though these almost forgotten or invisible war memorials appear to have lost in meaning and significance over the course of the last century, to attribute them a ‘shelf-life’ also denies them their ongoing life-stories which equally form part of their biographies. The case studies have also demonstrated that a few WWI memorials have received a new lease of life after almost being forgotten, or even after having been destroyed and only partially reconstructed. The memorial plaque of François Faber, which for a long time was relegated to a dark corner next to the national stadium, has clearly profited from its second relocation to the *Parc Municipal*, even though the emphasis at this new location, and in conjunction with the other plaques for national cyclists, remains on Faber as an athlete rather than *légionnaire*.

In Luxembourg, the memorial that best counteracts the concept of ‘shelf-life’ is without a doubt the *Gëlle Fra*, both the monument and the gilded statue. The *Gëlle Fra* seems to constantly be reinvented and grow in importance and meaning. It transformed from a WWI memorial dedicated to those who fought in the Allied forces, to a memorial that remembers the major conflicts in which Luxembourgers participated. This is solidified with the recent addition of an inscription for those Luxembourgers who fought in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War. In a way, the *Monument du Souvenir* has outgrown

its original purpose as a war memorial, expanding on it while also creating its own identity outside of it, transforming into a truly national monument and symbol of Luxembourg.

It was in particular the *Gëlle Fra* statue which grew in significance and morphed into a true national symbol of Luxembourg's freedom, independence, and identity even despite its disappearance, or maybe because of its disappearance. As remarked by Sandra Camarda, the case of the *Gëlle Fra* demonstrates how the absence of a memorial and the empty space it left behind can actually evoke its presence, highlighting what is in fact missing while also reminding the community of the historical events that took place. The memorial site of the *Gëlle Fra*, even without its obelisk and namesake, continued to be a place of mourning and remembrance.⁷¹²

The *Gëlle Fra* is a bit of an oddity in Luxembourg, and among other WWI memorials, having shifted literally and metaphorically. Many might not see it as a war memorial but as a national symbol and expression of Luxembourgish identity. This is evident through the very vocal reactions when the statue was to be shipped off to Shanghai in 2010 and its centenary being officially and publicly celebrated in May 2023, a milestone not given to any of the other Luxembourgish WWI memorials dating from the interwar period. No other memorial has achieved the same type of status as the *Gëlle Fra*. It is therefore not surprising that the *Gëlle Fra* is considered a *lieu de mémoire*, not attributed yet to any other war memorial in Luxembourg. What is astonishing though is that despite being viewed as a national symbol and monument, the *Gëlle Fra* does not hold the official title of “*Monument National*”, unlike for example the *Hinzerter Kräiz*, also known as *Monument National de la Résistance et de la Déportation*, or even the *Monument National de la Solidarité*.

Although the name *Gëlle Fra* refers to the whole memorial, it is still primarily this gilded statue that has become a true icon and has achieved a certain degree of cult status. What is also unique about the *Gëlle Fra* is how this gilded female statue has been merchandised. Certainly, there are examples of other war

⁷¹² Camarda, S. (2020), p. 192.

memorials featuring on souvenir articles such as postcards, fridge magnets or as subject for jigsaw puzzles, such as the *Arc de Triomphe*. But the *Gëlle Fra* goes beyond the general types of souvenirs and merchandise, including miniature statues, or being printed on mugs or plates, found at tourist shops and kiosks. Over the last few decades, the *Gëlle Fra* has been commercialised as a national product, similar to Luxembourgish beer or wine. Both the image and the name feature for example on labels for alcoholic beverages, such as gin, whisky, and sparkling wine, created by Will Kreutz (Figure 10-1).⁷¹³ In 2012, Luxembourgish beer brewery *Simon* also collaborated with Kreutz to launch a set of beer bottles with matching beer flutes decorated with the *Gëlle Fra*, while another set depicts Luxembourg's civil ensign and heraldic animal, the *Roude Léiw*.⁷¹⁴ As stated by Kreutz, the project resulted in the design of decorative beer bottles and glasses that represent Luxembourg, targeted at nationals and tourists alike.⁷¹⁵ The gilded statue is therefore on a par with Luxembourg's official national emblem, even featuring inside the Luxembourgish passport.



Figure 10-1 Selection of Gëlle Fra® products
© Laura Zenner

⁷¹³ For more products: Gëlle Fra (2023) *Born To Be Gold*.

⁷¹⁴ Meaning 'red lion', the *Roude Léiw* dates back to medieval times and was the coat of arms of the extinct House of Luxembourg. It is used as emblem for various institutions in Luxembourg, such as the Luxembourgish Government. The *Roude Léiw* also features on Luxembourg's second national flag.

⁷¹⁵ Murat, C. (2012) La Gëlle Fra et le Roude Léiw mis en bouteilles. *L'essentiel*, 12 June.

People are even able to purchase the *Gëlle Fra* if they so wish and have the necessary funds, although only as part of the Luxembourg-themed edition of the famous boardgame *Monopoly*. This version gives players the option to buy the *Gëlle Fra* alongside other well-known landmarks, buildings, or areas of Luxembourg. Being the second most expensive property after the grand-ducal palace, it is sure to cause more than one family feud when the opponents land on that square and have to pay rent to the owner. Moreover, the *Gëlle Fra* entered Luxembourgish pop culture by featuring on the cover of Luxembourg's most famous comic book series of superhero *Superjhem*, who fights crimes and solves mysteries all around the country. The first appearance of the statue on one of the covers was in 1988, only a few years after the statue's rediscovery and reconstruction. Majerus comments that "by using the statue as one of the symbols of Luxembourgish identity in a work aimed at a large readership, the work by creators Lucien Czuga and Roger Leiner reflected the high degree of recognition the monument enjoyed three years after its reconstruction"⁷¹⁶, despite having been missing for almost 40 years.

10.6 Location and relocation

The case studies also provide insightful information on the choice of location, and even relocation, for some of these memorials. As noted throughout this thesis, the location of a war memorial, and even the direction it is facing, cannot be seen as arbitrary and is one of the main considerations during the decision-making process that precedes the creation of such a memorial. It is therefore a very deliberate choice. It has been discussed elsewhere that this was already of great importance for other opulent monuments before WWI, be that the *Arc de Triomphe* or *Nelson's Column*. These monuments were placed at strategic public squares for everyone to see, their placement designed to symbolise the centrality of their message.⁷¹⁷ The *Statue of Peace* in Seoul as presented in Chapter 3 is another prime example of this.

⁷¹⁶ Majerus, B. (2007), p. 294.
[Own translation]

⁷¹⁷ Niven, B. (2007), p. 43.

Additionally, the spatial context of memorial spaces, i.e. their relation to their surroundings, is also of high importance. Shanti Sumartojo posits that “places are defined by their connections to their surroundings, and also to other places and times”.⁷¹⁸ Sumartojo refers to Trafalgar Square in London as an example of the discursive impact of spatial context to illustrate this point. Trafalgar Square is described as a commemorative precinct with monolithic representations of the national past and a memorial landscape, its many monuments and statues celebrating the power and reach of the former British Empire. For example, *Nelson’s Column* is metaphorically, visually, and physically connected to the busts and fountains commemorating WWI naval commanders John Jellicoe and David Beatty, making this site an example of ‘symbolic accretion’, as commented by Sumartojo.⁷¹⁹

Even though Luxembourg does not have such a clear commemorative precinct or memorial landscape in equal dimension to Trafalgar Square, the spatial context of the few WWI memorials discussed in previous chapters still needs to be considered. For example, the location of the *Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf* ties the monument directly to the tragic event and victims it commemorates. Placing this monument at a location other than the little square *Déieregaart* would therefore greatly impact its meaning and emotional value. Likewise, a spatial and symbolic relationship exists among the various commemorative street names, creating these so-called imaginary encounters of historical figures or events, even if unintentionally, such as *Rue du Maréchal Foch*, linking *Avenue du Dix Septembre* with *Boulevard de Verdun*.

Memorial sites have a history of their own. Not only war memorials have biographies, but also the sites where these are located. Just as memorials can evolve and even change over time, so do the sites. In some cases, the history of these sites can complicate their commemorative use and symbolism. Memorial sites rarely tell a fixed and final story of place. Instead, they can demonstrate multiple meanings to different people that change over time and with use, according to Sumartojo.⁷²⁰ The most prevalent example of memorial site

⁷¹⁸ Sumartojo, S. (2015), p. 12.

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9; p. 13.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13; p. 16.

histories for Luxembourg is once again the *Gëlle Fra* at *Place de la Constitution*. Not only was the memorial itself and the square marked by the brutal demolition by the Nazis, but also by the car park that was installed around the then only partially reconstructed memorial from the 1950s onwards. As noted in Chapter 6, the car park remains to this day, albeit with plans to remove it and to change the area around the *Gëlle Fra* into a more public and green space again.

Similarly, the continuous use of this area for various markets throughout the year, has a huge impact on its commemorative use and symbolism. This could be compared to Trafalgar Square, having a history of protests but also seeing tourists climb onto the lions at the bottom of *Nelson's Column*, or used for different public events, for example during the London Summer Olympics in 2012.⁷²¹ As argued by Sumartojo, the way this site is used “disrupts the national narrative and introduces messiness, ambivalence and indifference about the history that the site is meant to commemorate”.⁷²² It could equally be argued that the noise of the funfair rides and smell of grilled meats, fries and waffles disrupts the commemorative element of the *Gëlle Fra*. A recent article in *Tageblatt* even points out that the gilded lady might not enjoy the various smells coming from the food stalls, and instead would wish to see the square return to what was initially envisioned by her initiators and creator Claus Cito; that it should be a site of peace, silent contemplation and remembrance and not of the conflict caused by motorists fighting for one of the few parking spots on the square.⁷²³

Moreover, this square is so intrinsically interwoven with the memorial, that even the street signage equates *Place de la Constitution* with *Gëlle Fra*, as if they were synonyms (see Figure 10-2). Hence, as much as surroundings can have an effect on memorials, memorials can equally impact their environment. When it comes to the study of war memorials, the relation between a memorial and its surroundings should therefore always be evaluated together.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷²² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁷²³ Goetz, M. (2023).
[Own translation]



Figure 10-2 Street sign of Place de la Constitution, September 2021
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Relocations of war memorials might occur for various reasons and leading to different consequences, either beneficial or creating the opposite effect. The 2002 study carried out by Furlong, Knight and Slocombe found out that, for example, just over 3,000 memorials recorded within the UK have been moved from their original location.⁷²⁴ Reasons for a proposed relocation of a memorial could be a response to the changing nature of its surroundings (such as due to urban development), the original placement seen as no longer relevant or appropriate, or becoming too difficult for the older generations to access. Other memorials might have been moved because of the destruction or demolition of

⁷²⁴ Furlong, J. et al. (2002), p. 33.

buildings that once housed them, and from which they drew meaning. This might turn memorials into so-called ‘orphaned’ memorials.⁷²⁵

Emma Login argues that the decision to remove or relocate a war memorial “can be seen to demonstrate that the needs of current populations should take precedence over the needs of those in the past and over its heritage value. It also implies that it is the object itself that is of primary importance and not the context within its landscape setting.”⁷²⁶ The removal of a war memorial to a new location might of course aid in the accessibility and visibility, as well as facilitate the use and the continuation of active commemorative events if the original space could no longer accommodate for this. This might particularly be the case if the immediate surrounding was impacted by urban development. Nevertheless, Login cautions on the potential damage to the structural integrity of the memorial.⁷²⁷ The relocations of memorials years after their construction therefore “raises issues concerning both the preconceptions relating to the use of memorials, and their importance not only as objects of remembrance but also as historical objects”.⁷²⁸ Another issue that might arise from relocations addressed by Login, is that these memorials lose their spatial, and even symbolic, connection to their original placement and consequently being less likely to be found relevant.⁷²⁹

Out of the identified WWI memorials in Luxembourg, it can be concluded with certainty that at least five WWI memorials were relocated, in each case with considerable impacts and consequences, some more beneficial than others. The plaque of François Faber is the only known example to have been relocated twice, yet this fact is barely mentioned in most of the secondary sources consulted for this research. The catalogue of the exhibition “*Légionnaires*” mentions that the plaque was installed in Belair, but no more details on its subsequent two relocations, with only Léon Blasen commenting on this. Kmec’s short article on the monuments of Luxembourg City states that the *Parc Municipal* became a privileged place to pay homage to important figures, among

⁷²⁵ Furlong, J. et al. (2002), p. 33; Login, E. L. (2014) pp. 301-304.

⁷²⁶ Login, E. L. (2014), p. 301.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 301-304.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

them Faber and provides the date 1924, but this information is only half true. The plaque was indeed inaugurated in 1924, but not at the *Parc Municipal* which only happened decades later.⁷³⁰ The same could be observed for the other relocations of WWI memorials, such as the monument in Bonnevoie and the plaque in Tétange whose relocations are also not commented on in the “*Légionnaires*” catalogue, indicating that no detailed research into the biographies of these memorials, coupled with an analysis and discussion of what such relocations entail, has been conducted as this was not the aim.

Although the relocation of the memorial plaque for the *légionnaires* of Esch had good intentions and was seen as being beneficial for the plaque, moving it so it can be better seen by more people, it can be argued that in hindsight this relocation was a disservice. According to the last information received about the plaque, it was removed from the exhibition space within the *Musée National de la Résistance*, and aside from a short appearance at the exhibition “*Légionnaires*”, the plaque is now stored at the museum’s archives.

Observations and discussions about the different locations and relocations of the WWI memorials studied during this research are primarily based on my experiential fieldwork which was phenomenological in nature. Consequently, the next section will evaluate this method for the study of war memorials, highlighting any advantages as well as limitations.

10.7 Evaluation of phenomenological fieldwork for the study of war memorials

The different case studies presented in this thesis and their accompanying results from the surveys have demonstrated and validated that phenomenological fieldwork as proposed in this thesis is an effective approach in conjunction with more traditional desk-based assessments for the study of war memorials, and memorialisation in general. This experiential and interdisciplinary approach, blending history and archaeology, material culture, and to some degree geography, through active fieldwork and surveys facilitates the in-depth study of war memorials, producing meaningful results which may

⁷³⁰ Kmec, S. (2009), p. 44.

support or even challenge existing available resources, knowledge, and assumptions, while also opening up avenues for further research. Rather than just limiting the phenomenological survey to the memorial itself, the sensory experience was extended to its immediate surroundings as this can have a great influence on how someone experiences and perceives a war memorial and its importance within its contemporary context. As aforementioned, a war memorial should therefore not be seen as independent of and detached from its environment, but both should be studied and evaluated together.

In Chapter 3, the different critiques, pitfalls, and limitations of phenomenology were addressed. Nevertheless, there are still many advantages to this method to keep in mind, especially when used within a contemporary setting and by asking questions and making observations about the current state of the memorial and surroundings, which I argue is one of the main strengths and values of this method, rather than trying to interpret the past. Links to the past and how previous generations, whose mindsets, values, and experiences differ from today, might have experienced a memorial in a landscape or setting, which evolved over time, can still be attempted but these need to be recognised as mere hypotheses and speculations rather than revealed and universal truths. The focus should therefore remain on the here and now.

Equipped with and guided by a set of research questions during my fieldwork, I approached and experienced the memorials paying particular attention to various details. This included how the memorial can be located and first seen, sometimes even changing the direction of approach to highlight differences in accessibility and visibility. As a sensory and bodily experience, I primarily focused on sight and sound noting down any visual or audible distractions or particularities. Especially within an urban setting, these cannot be avoided or ignored but can illustrate how a war memorial may have become fully integrated into the fabric of its modern-day surroundings.

Nevertheless, as the surveys were carried out at a specific and determined time, also influenced by travel restrictions due to Covid-19, the observations made are thus limited and unique to that time. Only in a few cases was a second visit of a memorial possible and attempted, which in turn revealed different observations

to the first visit. This was particularly evident with the *Gëlle Fra* which sits in a very active and dynamic square. The surveys did not necessarily coincide with periods when commemorative events take place, which would place the memorial in a completely different and preconditioned setting. Instead, the phenomenological surveys happened to be carried out at random times, impacted by the given opportunities to travel to Luxembourg. Nonetheless, this facilitated the study and experience of the memorials as part of everyday life.

Phenomenology as a descriptive study of conscious experience as also used in disciplines like archaeology allows for observations to be made that otherwise might go unnoticed. The study, analysis, and subsequent discussion of the aforementioned war memorials would normally be limited to more conventional desk-based assessments only, which are, however, detached. Fresh insights through phenomenology might be the spatial relationship to other memorials, structures or features which in turn might impact how the memorial being studied is perceived and interpreted. Any alterations to the memorials or their surroundings can also usually only be noticed and evaluated when they are fully experienced first-hand. This is also because the memorial is purposefully approached and thereby seen in a different light through this methodology. Phenomenology requires the researcher to act as an active and conscious observer and to be hyperaware of the memorial and environment. This is ultimately very different to how the general public simply walking past a memorial site might experience or interact with it, maybe only quickly glancing at the memorial or completely ignoring it. My experience of these war memorials therefore differs greatly from other people as I approached them with a preconditioned aim.

This points towards the subjective nature of phenomenological archaeology. Criticised for its subjectiveness and issues of scientific replicability, these characteristics can, however, be seen as strengths rather than weaknesses. The observations made during the fieldwork and evaluated in the case studies are my own and unique to my experience and interpretation. If the phenomenological survey were to be attempted again at a different time, or by another person, the results would produce variances which can lead to new research avenues for insightful comparative studies.

A further advantage of phenomenological archaeology for the study of war memorials is its ability to uncover the memorial's most recent chapter of its biography. While written and photographic sources illuminate the past of these memorials, informing about the decision-making processes in terms of location or design, about initiators as well as their inauguration and certain changes over time, phenomenology when used as a contemporary approach sheds light on the present, on the current condition and state of these memorials. Phenomenology might even offer glimpses into the future and allow for speculation on how these memorials and surroundings might develop in the coming years.

With this most recent chapter of a war memorial, phenomenological fieldwork therefore helps in the construction of its biography, as complete as possible given the other available resources. These biographies show the memorials' evolution, from time of inception to the present day, highlighting any significant changes, be that to the memorial or its surroundings, each with their own set of consequences. This could be the relocation of the memorial, the planting or removal of vegetation, additional inscriptions, or even as often observed in Luxembourg, the installation of a car park adjacent to the memorial space.

Consequently, these possible alterations demonstrate that war memorials are anything but mute and inactive features in the urban or rural landscape, but that even a hundred years on, they possess the ability to provoke questions and inspire further in-depth research, such as the plaque for the French aviator at Differdange or the replica in Tétange. In that sense, unless a war memorial is entirely destroyed or lost, it can also be argued that its biography might never be fully completed, but instead has an open ending as the memorial and surroundings are likely to continue to evolve. In conclusion, phenomenology of war memorials builds a new set of primary data, which in conjunction with more traditional written sources and older photographs, can be utilised to uncover hitherto unknown or neglected aspects of these structures and their environment, and enrich their biographies.

10.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter evaluated the findings from my research which resulted in the detailed case studies of selected memorials, in an attempt to construct their biographies, and in the creation of a comprehensive inventory of WWI memorials in Luxembourg and corresponding location maps. My findings subsequently compliment but also correct existing literature and sources on Luxembourg's WWI memorials. This in turn - I hope - will encourage future studies within this field and open up new and different opportunities for subsequent comparative studies, be this with WWII memorials within Luxembourg or other war memorials outside its borders.

Through this discussion, different themes were evaluated in relation to Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI. All in all, as demonstrated throughout this thesis, it is particularly the post-war narrative that played a crucial role in the memorialisation of '*la petite guerre*' in Luxembourg, often emphasised through choice of design and language, leading to some aspects of Luxembourg's experience of and involvement in WWI to be exaggerated and remembered, while others have been omitted and forgotten.

The construction of the most recent chapters of these biographies, as well as any observations gained about their location, or effects of any alterations, are the result from my experiential fieldwork based on phenomenology. This chapter thus highlighted the validity of this approach, as most of the observations cannot be obtained through written or photographic sources, even though they are an integral part in helping to construct the earlier chapters of the biographies. It is therefore this interdisciplinary approach, combining desk-based assessment with first-hand experiences of coming face to face with these memorials that is proposed and validated in this thesis for the study of war memorials.

Chapter 11 Conclusion

11.1 A biographical and phenomenological study of war memorials in Luxembourg

My thesis explored the memorialisation of the so-called '*petite guerre*' in Luxembourg, using a phenomenological and biographical approach to study war memorials. Although other forms of commemoration were also mentioned, being intrinsically interwoven with memorialisation, I decided to focus on war memorials as these are built with the intention to last, therefore presenting physical and visible manifestations and reminders of how Luxembourg chose to remember this conflict in the public sphere. The war memorials studied included a variety of monuments, for example in the form of an obelisk, a column or even a mausoleum, as well as memorial plaques. Commemorative street names were equally considered, belonging to both the realms of commemoration and memorialisation.

War memorialisation, and in particular the memorialisation of WWI as covered in my thesis is still very much in its infancy from an academic level within Luxembourg with no in-depth studies of the wider themes of WWI memorials yet undertaken. The existing secondary literature and academic work tends to focus on very particular memorials, such as the famous *Gëlle Fra*, or in conjunction with overarching themes such as the *légionnaires*. In the latter scenario, war memorials often only feature as by-products rather than the main focus of such research and publications. Internationally, Luxembourg's WWI memorials have also not enjoyed much attention. Moreover, and as mentioned throughout this thesis, WWI remains overshadowed by WWII in almost every aspect from a Luxembourgish perspective. This in turn explains the designation of '*petite guerre*' for WWI in contrast to *Grande Guerre* which is attributed to WWII. This is not just evident in the historiography but also when considering memorialisation presenting a massive margin on a quantitative level.

The idea behind and primary aim of my thesis was thus to expand on this very scarce literature on WWI memorials in Luxembourg by creating my own data,

applying an interdisciplinary approach of conventional desk-based assessment but most importantly through experiential fieldwork based on phenomenology to open up new avenues for future research within this field. My findings from this experiential fieldwork resulted in the creation of three main products or data sets: the first is an inventory listing all identified WWI memorials, either on their own or in combination with WWII, including details on type, date (if known), and location, with a short description and a photograph taken during the fieldwork; the second are location maps to indicating the identified WWI memorials. In particular, the map of Luxembourg City shows considerable detail, helping to visualise the locations, spatial organisation and connection of the various memorials and also commemorative street names; the third are the biographies of selected case studies, which illustrate the evolution of these memorials from time of creation to the present day.

War memorials are created by groups of people for a specific reason and purpose. As noted by Winter, these so-called ‘agents of remembrance’ are goal-oriented people, with an agenda or project, and their traces can ideally be found in local and national archives or newspapers.⁷³¹ Consequently, a first step was to consult primary and secondary written sources along with photographs from different moments in time to investigate the initial and intermediate chapters of these war memorials. Written evidence of any changes, be those alterations to the memorial by either adding or removing elements or inscriptions, modifications of the surroundings, relocations, removals or even destruction, can inform a researcher about the evolution of the memorial and memorial space being studied as well as their continued use over time, gradually adding more chapters to their biographies. These biographies are as complete as possible depending on the materials available with regard to the earlier or intermediate chapters. However, as seen in some of the cases in this thesis, such sources are not always easily available leading to unanswered questions and gaps, like pages missing from a book. Moreover, only relying on these sources does usually not include details on the most current state and chapter of a war memorial.

⁷³¹ Winter, J. (2006), p. 136.

In order to experience the most recent chapter of a war memorial's biography, I proposed a phenomenological approach, which in turn also aided with the creation of the location maps and inventory. Rather than trying to gain insights into how people from the past might have experienced these memorials, for which phenomenology has often been employed, in particular within archaeology, I used phenomenology as a contemporary and subjective experience. Through experiential fieldwork based on the idea of being in the here and now and experiencing the memorials first-hand, I could thus shed light on the contemporary setting of a war memorial, expanding on the memorial's biography. A phenomenological approach is therefore ideal to be combined with a biographical approach for the study of war memorials.

By visiting the memorials and experiencing them and their surroundings through my bodily presence and senses, in particular sight and sound, observation could be made which would go unnoticed if the study of war memorials were only limited to written or photographic sources. The impact of various audible and visual factors was for example very evident in the case of the *Gëlle Fra* demonstrating that visiting this memorial space at specific moments during the year, such as while the Christmas market was set up around the memorial, left a completely different impression than during visits when the usual car park was there. In other cases, the observations gained during the surveys even encouraged further archival research. This was for instance the case for the memorial in Clausen and the two trees planted next to it. As evidenced from older photographs, these trees were a later addition which nowadays considerably impact the memorial. Being aware of these trees and how they affected my visibility of the memorial from certain vantage points during the fieldwork, prompted me to find out when and why these trees were planted.

Apart from the construction of these biographies, through my analysis of Luxembourg's memorialisation of WWI various questions as to how this '*petite guerre*' has been memorialised were explored and illustrated in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Focus was given to how the post-war narrative plays into the memorialisation of WWI, paying attention to what and who is remembered, in which way, and what or who is left out. To do this, Chapter 2 firstly introduced war memorialisation in general, briefly looking at the history of war memorials

by exploring examples and themes from different countries before highlighting how WWI marked a considerable shift within war memorialisation. The political dimension is a dominant feature within war memorials influenced by the political and social climate at the time of their construction, therefore also susceptible to change. War memorialisation is further motivated and influenced by a country's participation in and experience of a conflict.

Hence, Chapter 4 served as historical background to provide the necessary context of Luxembourg and its history, also exploring the relationship of Luxembourg with France on one side, and with Germany on the other side, to get a better understanding of the attitudes towards these two neighbours and the subsequent changes before, during, and after the war. The chapter shed light on the invasion and occupation years, with a focus on the wartime economy, the aerial attacks and issues of supplies and food. The chapter also explored the participation of Luxembourgish expatriates in different Allied forces, in particular Luxembourgers within the *Légion étrangère*, the so-called *légionnaires*. Nevertheless, it was also highlighted that, although low in number, several people of Luxembourgish descent were drafted into the Imperial German Army yet completely left out from most secondary sources and any type of WWI remembrance in Luxembourg.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of the post-war narrative, crafted during a time when Luxembourg's future was hanging by a thread due to internal and external political turmoil and the risk of annexation by France or Belgium. Nevertheless, Luxembourg sought to amend its relationships with these two neighbours, by severing all ties with Germany. It has been argued that it was during this time that the narrative of Luxembourg being one of the Allies and therefore among the victors, despite Luxembourg's ambiguous neutrality and being considered enemy territory during the war, was established. This was supported and amplified by the concept of the *légionnaires*, whose numbers were widely exaggerated to show Luxembourg's contribution as one of the Allies. It is then this narrative, which tells an amended version of events, that runs like a red thread through all WWI memorials dating from the interwar period, as also supported by different national scholars. This was further exemplified through the selected case studies, by including concrete examples

of how the symbols and language used, either in the inscriptions and designs, inaugural speeches or even newspaper reports, mirror, cement and reinforce this narrative, while at the same time omitting other facts.

Omission, and consequently forgetting, was therefore another major theme covered by my thesis and illustrated through different case studies. Here, prime examples are the memorials in Bonnevoie and Clausen. Even though these memorials remember the air raids and the civilian victims, the inscription omits who the originators of these attacks were, namely the Allies. It has been argued that this was a deliberate choice and further played into the narrative of Luxembourg being one of the Allies. Yet, anyone walking past these memorials and reading the inscriptions, and without any background information on what happened, would not make the association that the French and British, Luxembourg's claimed Allies, carried out these attacks. It is therefore not just who or what is being remembered through memorials but also in what way. This in turn can impact how war memorials shape, or even re-shape, a narrative of historical events. In the case of Luxembourg's memorialisation of this '*petite guerre*', remembering and forgetting are two sides of the same coin.

11.2 Future research

As specified elsewhere, phenomenology has been criticised for its subjectivity and lacking replicability. The observations gathered during my fieldwork occurred at a specific moment in time. Replicating the phenomenological exercise at different times during the day or year therefore produces different results, which was also illustrated through my additional visits of the *Gëlle Fra*. Experiencing the *Gëlle Fra* and its environment during the festive season with the Christmas market in full swing will unequivocally be different than visiting the same memorial during a quiet spring day or even on *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale*. Similarly, the observations gained during my fieldwork are based on my own bodily and sensory experiences, which ultimately are unique to me. Moreover, not only did I approach the memorials with a certain mindset, purpose, and research questions in mind, but my experience and interpretation were also influenced by my personal cultural and political values, attitudes, as well as preconceived ideas and knowledge. Adding to this, I

experienced the memorials and their surroundings as a female millennial with no direct connection to WWI, or the soldiers or civilian victims being remembered.

To add to the study of war memorials in Luxembourg through this experiential approach, additional surveys could therefore be conducted in the years to come. War memorials are generally built with the intention to last and to be static - although as noted elsewhere, some memorials prove the opposite. In many cases, they continue to be a constant presence in the urban or rural landscape where they have been placed even long after the events they commemorate have left the spheres of living memory. Therefore, through their presence, their life-stories also continue. Even if they might have become abandoned, neglected, or convey a message that seems no longer relevant to current society, these factors are still part of their life-stories and worthy investigating. The results from my phenomenological survey present by no means their final chapter but just one additional chapter, almost like a snapshot taken in that specific moment, and to which new chapters can constantly be added. With the *Place de la Constitution* set to undergo remodelling, it would therefore be highly interesting to conduct a similar survey again once this has been completed to gain new observations on how the *Gëlle Fra* is perceived in this new public space. The same could be done for example with the memorial in Clausen, to see if the car park next to it will ever disappear or not, and how this would change the memorial site.

Furthermore, this same phenomenological exercise could be undertaken with a wider focus group, for which my research has set the base. Participants from various backgrounds and ages could take part in this project to gather more data and to enable insightful comparative studies on how different people experience the same memorial and environment, similar to the study carried out by Claire Nolan (see Chapter 3). Participants would receive a questionnaire, answering similar questions as used during my fieldwork, and noting down any observations. The questionnaire could also include wider questions to gauge participants' knowledge on Luxembourg during WWI and specifically on its memorialisation and commemoration, such as naming all known WWI memorials and their location before commencing the phenomenological fieldwork. Through this, it would facilitate to gather more data that could be evaluated to answer

additional questions related to collective memory. By getting a better sense of what people know and how they interact with these war memorials, the information gathered would therefore also add to the cultural biography of the memorials to further assess the relationship between Luxembourgish WWI memorials and its community, similar as undertaken by John R. Stephens in the case of the Katanning war memorial in Western Australia (see Chapter 3).

One of my primary aims and products of this research was the creation of a comprehensive inventory and corresponding location maps. However, as mentioned before, there is no guarantee that the inventory and maps include all WWI memorials in Luxembourg. Therefore, further research would be required to identify any missing WWI memorials, likely memorials commemorating both WWI and WWII as seen in some of the already identified memorials. However, as the number of WWII memorials in Luxembourg surpasses 500, this would be a greater endeavour, not realisable by a single researcher as it would also require searching the length and breadth of the country for any missing war memorials. Additionally, as demonstrated through my thesis, especially smaller and lesser-known memorials are not always as obvious and easy to find.

Hence to do this, I propose a nationwide project involving the general public. Similar to the *Imperial War Museum's* War Memorial Register for British war memorials, which counts on the contribution of the population either through volunteering or directly contributing to updating the register by sending in photographs and information of local memorials within the area they live, the same could be applied to Luxembourg. A similar project was launched through the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C²DH) at the University of Luxembourg, although with a focus on WWII. The "WARLUX" project, which ran from March 2020 to March 2023, sent out a call for contribution to the general public to share their memories and personal documents that provide insight into individual experiences and stories during WWII.⁷³² The same could thus be done for WWI memorials. Apart from aiding the identification and localisation of any missing WWI memorials through such a project with public participation, unanswered questions regarding, for example

⁷³² Research Luxembourg (2021) *Contemporary History in Luxembourg: WARLUX project*.

the replica of the plaque in Tétange or the plaque for French aviator Alfred Furgerot in Differdange, could be gained. The latter case might also include getting information on the missing plaque for his co-pilot Marius Lautiron.

Moreover, the potential of wider comparative studies has been proposed throughout this thesis. This could be in the form of comparing WWI memorials to WWII memorials in Luxembourg, or even broader by encompassing other countries and other conflicts, in each case by employing similar experiential and biographical approaches. This would then also help to draw attention to other noteworthy WWI memorials apart from the *Gëlle Fra*. As suggested in Chapter 9, such a comparative study could for instance be undertaken in the case of François Faber and how the same individual has been memorialised across borders.

Given the scope of this PhD thesis, the prime focus remained on memorialisation and thus on monuments, memorial plaques and also street names. However, other forms of memorialisation as well as commemoration could also be considered. This could for instance include individual graves of fallen soldiers or civilian victims, various types of memorabilia that families might have kept, commemorative books and medals. Equally, exhibitions, apps and other publications can be considered forms of commemoration; especially exhibitions and any walking tours via apps would be suitable for experiential fieldwork. Even though the case studies also addressed different commemorative events, from inauguration and remembrance services in later years to anniversaries, there is considerable potential to investigate these events and ceremonies to get more insights on how Luxembourg commemorated WWI over the course of the last century. This would certainly require a deep dive into the different national newspapers to identify as many of these remembrance events and how these were reported on and evolved over time, also paying attention to the political undertones of each newspaper, from conservative to liberal. Given the immense quantity of newspapers covering the last hundred odd years, this would equally be a bigger project not realisable by a single researcher. These are just some of the possible avenues of research that could be undertaken in the future, demonstrating the wide expanse of possibilities within the study of war memorials and memorialisation in Luxembourg.

As rightly and eloquently articulated by Randolph Evans, who served as US ambassador to Luxembourg from 2018 to 2021,

“From now on, for future generations, it is the current generation that must be the voice that bears witness. To be credible, this voice must be rooted in experiences that no computer or video can replace, namely the personal connections created by our own senses: seeing the places with our own eyes; hearing the stories of those who know them; touching the *monuments aux morts*; tasting the air of the battlefields; and inhaling the ruins of the camps.”⁷³³

My thesis explored different questions and themes of WWI memorialisation in Luxembourg by using a phenomenological and biographical approach to study war memorials. Through this approach, I got to personally experience these memorials, observing them and their surroundings, thereby collecting and processing new data which, as phrased by Evans, is rooted in my personal connection created by my own senses. By completing this PhD research and producing a comprehensive inventory and location maps of WWI memorials in Luxembourg, I have not only aimed to answer several research questions relating to Luxembourg’s memorialisation of this ‘*petite guerre*’, but I have also - hopefully - managed to bear witness in my own way for future research, to contribute to the hitherto understudied field of WWI memorialisation in Luxembourg, and to inspire new research and projects within this field.

⁷³³ Evans, R. (2018) Jour de l’Armistice: Pourquoi il est important de commémorer le centenaire. *Luxemburger Wort*, 10/11 November, p. 17.
[Own translation]

Appendix 1

Inventory of WWI memorials in Luxembourg

All photographs in this inventory © Laura Zenner, except photograph of the memorial plaque in Esch-sur-Alzette, which was provided by *Musée National de la Résistance*.

Monument du Souvenir (*Gëlle Fra*)



Location: Place de la Constitution, Luxembourg City

Type: Obelisk with statue

Date: 1923/1985

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII, Korean War, Spanish Civil War (International Brigades)

Description: The *Monument du Souvenir*, better known as *Gëlle Fra* due to its gilded female statue, is the best-known monument and war memorial in Luxembourg, initially designed to commemorate the WWI Luxembourgish volunteers who fought for the Allies. The memorial was destroyed in 1940 by the Nazis and the gilded statue 'disappeared' until the early 1980s. After the statue's rediscovery, the then only partially reconstructed memorial regained its former shape, being reinaugurated on Luxembourg's national holiday in 1985. The meaning, status and importance of the memorial were altered and extended over the decades, also remembering WWII, the Korean War, and since recently the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War through new inscriptions and plaques. Additional small plaques recall its destruction in 1940. Given its central location and placement on a former bastion, the tall obelisk topped by the famous *Gëlle Fra* statue, is visible even from a distance. The memorial is situated in a very bustling part of the capital, along a busy road and surrounded by a car park (soon to disappear), an area often transformed into markets and small funfairs. The *Gëlle Fra* is thus at the centre of many national and cultural events. The memorial is in very good condition suggesting regular maintenance, such as the two bronze male figures and the plinth having been cleaned recently. Two flagpoles with the Luxembourgish flag stress the national value and significance of this war memorial, having morphed into a truly national monument and symbol of Luxembourg's independence, history and identity. This is also evident by the *Gëlle Fra*'s centenary in May 2023 with wide coverage in the media and a celebratory ceremony.

See Chapter 6 for more information.

Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre & Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu



Location: Cimetière Notre Dame, Limpertsberg, Luxembourg City

Type: Mausoleum and tomb

Date: 1923

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: This mausoleum is the final resting place of 56 French soldiers who died on Luxembourgish territory during WWI and could not be repatriated. The tomb in the middle serves a dual function as symbolic tomb for the unknown Luxembourgish *légionnaire* as well as entrance to the crypt below, where the 56 French soldiers and the unknown Luxembourgish *légionnaire* are buried side by side. Through this, the memorial has a very clear transnational dimension and cements the union between Luxembourg and France. The name and provenance of each French soldier, including date of birth and death, are listed on individual marble plaques. The memorial is situated towards the back of the cemetery and cannot be seen from any of the main entrances. Without any signposts, this WWI memorial thereby runs the risk of being overlooked despite its grand size. The memorial has declined in stature on a national level in the past decades, no longer part of the official ceremonies on *Journée de la Commémoration Nationale*. The memorial is in very good condition, apart from a few marks resulting from being exposed to the elements over the past hundred years. The surfaces are clean, the lettering legible and the flower beds are also tidy and well kept, suggesting regular upkeep.

See Chapter 7 for more information.

Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf



Location: Rue de Clausen/Rue Malakoff, Clausen, Luxembourg City

Type: Column

Date: 1924

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: Inaugurated on 3rd August 1924, this local WWI memorial in Clausen is dedicated to the ten civilian victims from Clausen and neighbouring Neudorf killed during an air raid on 8th July 1918 by British RAF planes. The attackers are, however, not mentioned on the inscription of the monument, arguably a deliberate choice in line with the post-war narrative. Being situated at the small square off *Rue de Clausen*, known as *Déieregart*, the location is of high emotional and symbolic meaning, as it is said that the majority of the victims were killed through a single bomb within this area. Nevertheless, nowadays the column has an urban setting, next to a pub and a small car park, which can be both audible and visible influences. The surfaces are clean and the lettering, listing the names of all ten victims and respective date of birth, are legible; however, the monument is partially hidden by two trees depending on vantage point. Being located further outside of what can be considered the centre of Clausen, and for lack of signposting, it can be assumed that only locals and those frequenting the pub are aware of the memorial.

See Chapter 8 for more information.

Monument aux Morts des deux guerres - Bonnevoie



Location: Cimetière de Bonnevoie, Bonnevoie, Luxembourg City

Type: Obelisk

Date: 1922/1957

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII

Description: This local war monument is situated within a memorial space consisting of three separated but interconnected features. The first, and original monument dating from 1922, is an obelisk honouring and listing the names of the fallen *légionnaires* and civilian deaths by aerial attacks of Bonnevoie and neighbouring Hollerich. The second is a slate in front of the obelisk commemorating both world wars and the third is a remembrance wall at the back dedicated to the victims of WWII (both from 1957). It is the only known WWI memorial in Luxembourg that creates this link between *légionnaires* and civilian deaths caused by air raids; between martyrs and heroes. Even though these air raids were carried out by the Allies, the inscription of the memorial makes no mention of it. After WWII, it was decided to relocate the obelisk to its current location at one of the four corners of the cemetery at the same time as the additions for WWII were made to create this communal memorial site. The memorial was inaugurated for a second time in 1957. The memorial space is kept in good condition, however, being situated behind the ceremonial hall used for funerals, constructed in the 1980s, the memorial space is also partially hidden from view depending on vantage point.

See Chapter 8 for more information.

Memorial plaque for François Faber



Location: Parc Municipal, Luxembourg City

Type: Plaque

Date: 1924/1937/1991

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: This plaque honours racing cyclist François Faber, winner of the *Tour de France*, who served in the *Légion étrangère* and died on the battlefield in 1915. The plaque is marked by two relocations. Originally located at the velodrome in Belair (1924) and later at *Stade Josy Barthel* (1937), the plaque portraying Faber's bust is now situated in the *Parc Municipal* (1991) alongside three other notable Luxembourgish racing cyclist. This memorial space thus primarily focuses on these four athletes rather than serving the purpose of remembering WWI, to which only Faber has a direct connection. Nevertheless, through the additional plaque below Faber's portrait, with information on his military engagement in WWI, Faber's plaque retains its dual function. The area is well maintained, with a little pathway leading up to the plaques. Being located within a park, the plaques are not visible from the main road.

See Chapter 9 for more information.

Memorial plaque for légionnaires of Tétange



Location: Rue de l'École, École Jean-Pierre Nuel, Tétange

Type: Plaque

Date: 1919/1949

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: Mounted on the gable wall of the local primary school, this small plaque remembers two *légionnaires* of Tétange who died on the battlefield, as well as naming the other six *légionnaires* of this small town in the south of Luxembourg. Nowadays, the plaque is however a replica, with the original on display at the local museum. Nonetheless, with the original plaque's inauguration occurring in October 1919, it counts amongst the earliest known WWI memorials in Luxembourg. Initially mounted inside the local church, and temporarily removed during WWII, the original plaque was relocated to its current site at the school when the large WWII memorial was inaugurated in August 1949. It is unknown why or when it was decided to replace the original plaque with a replica. The plaque forms part of a bigger and well-maintained memorial space including two monuments dedicated to WWII, which also overshadow the small plaque. Given its small size and dark lettering, the purpose of this plaque only becomes apparent when standing right in front of it and reading the inscription. It could otherwise easily be overlooked or mistaken for a WWII plaque. The plaque's location at the primary school and next to a main road, named after the *légionnaires*, sets it into a much more urban space than at its previous location inside the church.

See Chapter 9 for more information.

Memorial plaque for légionnaires of Esch-sur-Alzette



Location: Musée National de la Résistance, Esch-sur Alzette

Type: Plaque

Date: 1923

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: This marble plaque remembers the fallen *légionnaires* of Esch-sur-Alzette, a former industrial town in the south of Luxembourg. The plaque was initially installed at the local town hall, on the first floor next to the secretariat, inaugurated on 14th July 1923. The plaque remained at this location for several decades before it was decided to move it to the *Musée National de la Résistance* in the early 2000s. The reasons for this removal and relocation are thought to be linked to refurbishment works at the town hall and the plaque not being visible to the public by being situated inside a municipal building. Nevertheless, the relocation of the plaque to the museum only allowed visitors to the museum to view the plaque, which was mounted among exhibits related to WWII, thereby seeming out of place. The plaque was eventually dismantled and is currently stored in the museum's archives, and thus no longer accessible and visible to the public, apart from being on display at the temporary exhibition "*Légionnaires*" in 2021.

See Chapter 9 for more information.

Memorial plaque for French aviator Alfred Furgerot



Location: Cimetière de Differdange, Differdange

Type: Plaque

Date: unknown

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: This small memorial plaque for French aviator Alfred Furgerot, who was shot down over Differdange in 1917, is situated at the back wall of the cemetery in Differdange. Due to its small size and being surrounded by thick ivy, the plaque can easily be missed and is not visible from any of the entrances. The plaque is close to another, bigger monument commemorating WWII victims. Information on this plaque is very scarce, without details on initiators or an official inauguration date. Details on the disappearance of a second plaque for this co-pilot Marius Lautiron are also missing. The plaque for Alfred Furgerot is in very good condition and the lettering very clear, having recently been restored. The ivy around it is also cut back, nicely framing the plaque, suggesting that this is done regularly to avoid the plaque being overgrown by the ivy. Nevertheless, a pile of gravel in front of the plaque equally implies the little importance attributed to this plaque.

See Chapter 9 for more information.

Monument aux Morts - Born



Location: Église St Martin, Schlassstrooss, Born

Type: Monolith

Date: 1978

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII

Description: This memorial commemorates victims of both world wars, situated at the entrance to the local church of Born, in the east of Luxembourg, close to the German border. The memorial was inaugurated on 15th October 1978, attended by former members of the resistance and the *enrolés de force*, as reported by *Luxemburger Wort*. The monument consists of a monolith crafted from native soil, meant to represent the unity with which the citizens of Born keep the memories of their missing and fallen sons alive. Even though this memorial commemorates victims of both world wars, the inaugural event focused on WWII.⁷³⁴ No further information about possible *légionnaires* from Born and surroundings are provided. After contacting the local council, and the *Service Historique* of Born, it was confirmed that they did not have further documents on WWI in their archives. Being situated within a cemetery in a small patch of grass, the space is well kept, with a flowerpot decorated with the Luxembourgish flag in front of the monolith at the time of my visit, and a flagpole (without flag) to its left. Separated from the main pathway by low hedges, a small path leads to the monolith. However, the dark lettering of the inscription on the dark plaque makes it difficult to read. Although the monument is not signposted, it is easy to find as it is partially visible from the main street running through the village, and also immediately visible when exiting the church.

⁷³⁴ *Luxemburger Wort*, 131. Jg., n° 238 (18.10.1978), p. 6.

Monument aux Morts - Fischbach



Location: Rue de l'Église, Fischbach

Type: Monolith

Date: 2013

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII

Description: This monument commemorates the victims of both world wars, situated in front of the local church of Fischbach, adjacent to a car park. No written sources about this monument could be found during my research; however, as communicated by the staff at the local council and their former mayor, the monument was inaugurated on 21st June 2013 at the same time as the church square was reinaugurated after refurbishment works. Before this date, no war memorial existed in this locality, which residents regretted in previous years, especially for commemorative dates. Given its recent creation, this war memorial thus shows how memorialisation can occur even decades after the conflict it commemorates has ended. In terms of location, the monument is at first not visible when walking up the steep street coming from the main road, or when standing in front of the main steps leading to the church and cemetery as it is behind a curve and hidden by the cemetery wall. It is also not visible when walking around the cemetery or when exiting the church, due to the cemetery wall. A small wooden bench is placed next to the monument allowing for people to rest as well as remember the victims. The memorial space is well maintained, with trimmed hedges and some flowerpots. The Luxembourgish flag gives this memorial space a more national feeling. The lettering is legible although the plaque is rather dark. The inscription is in Luxembourg's national language rather than French like the majority of war memorials in Luxembourg.

Monument aux Morts - Manternach



Location: Cimetière de Manternach, Manternach

Type: Cemetery altar/statue

Date: estimated 1960-1965

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII

Description: This small cemetery altar with a statue of Christ and Mary set on a plinth with the inscription “*Morts pour la patrie*” is located at the back of the cemetery in Manternach, close to the church. Below the inscription, the name of J.P. Weis with the dates 1914-1918 is listed, with another four names with the dates 1940-1945. From information provided by the local council, it has been confirmed that Jean Pierre Weis (sometimes spelled Weiss) was born 1889 in Manternach and had enlisted as a *légionnaire*. He died in May 1915 in La Targette, Pas-de-Calais, succumbing to injuries. He is further listed in the *Livre d'Or de nos Légionnaires* and also mentioned by David Heal. It is estimated that the inauguration of the small monument occurred between 1960 and 1965, but no written sources could be found. The purpose of this altar as a war memorial only becomes apparent when approaching the altar as it is situated at the end of the central path of the cemetery, which itself is up a hill and not visible from the street below. The memorial space is well kept, the inscription legible; however, the statue has some marks and chipped at several places.

Monument aux Morts - Redange-sur-Attert



Location: Place Bian, Redange-sur-Attert

Type: Stone monument/wall

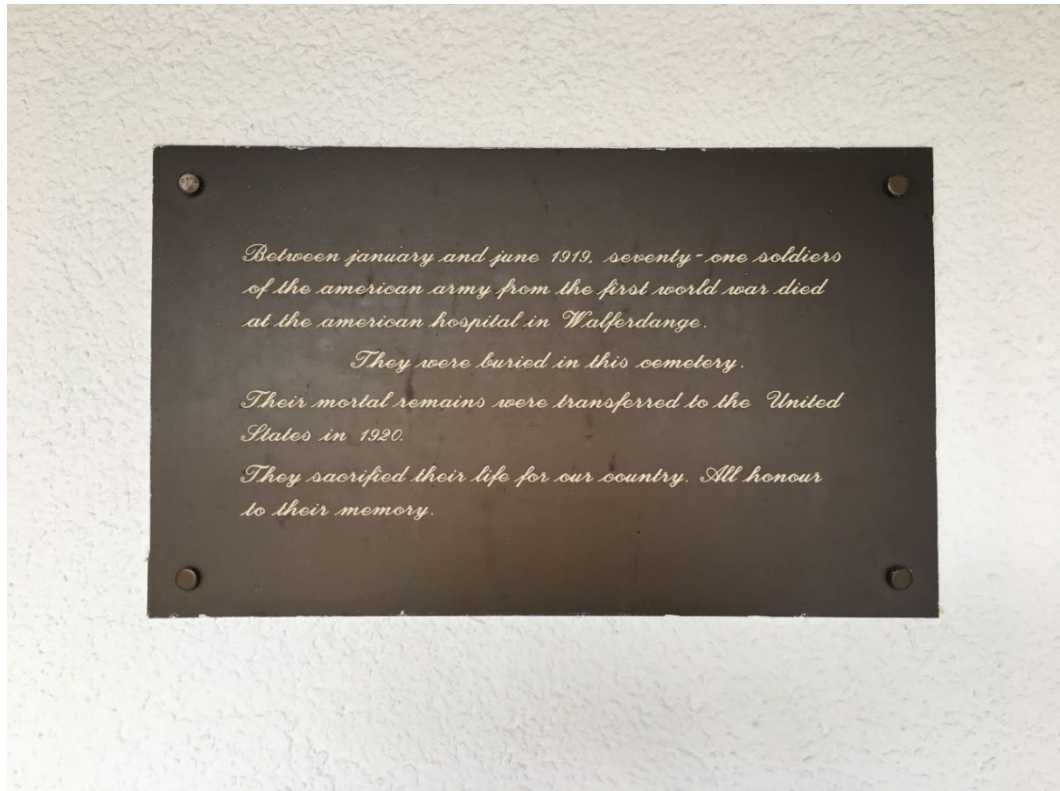
Date: circa 1963-1964

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII

Description: Located at the outer cemetery wall with steps leading up to the monument next to the cemetery entrance, this monument is dedicated to both world wars. The inscription is integrated into the cemetery wall with a relief of a pietà sculpture towards the left, and is facing *Place Bian*, with the local church situated next to it. *Luxemburger Wort* first reported in 1959 on plans for a monument for victims of both world wars, with an article in 1961 mentioning the well-chosen location at the cemetery wall, allowing anyone exiting the church or visiting the cemetery to see the monument and remember the victims. The inscription and pietà sculpture, the latter by sculptor Charles Kohl, were planned to be completed in late 1963, but no official inauguration date could be confirmed.⁷³⁵ The memorial space is well kept and the two flagpoles towards the left, flying both Luxembourgish flags, lend the whole memorial space a national atmosphere. However, the thin engraved lettering of the inscription is barely noticeable or legible from a distance (as evident by this photograph), especially from the main road across *Place Bian*, which is also partially a car park. *Place Bian* is a green and leafy square, including a gazebo and several trees which, depending on vantage point, can obscure the memorial wall towards the back of *Place Bian*.

⁷³⁵ *Luxemburger Wort*, 112. Jg., n° 108/109 (18.04.1959), p. 6; *Luxemburger Wort*, 114. Jg., n° 88 (29.03.1961), p. 6; *Luxemburger Wort*, 116. Jg., n° 245/246 (03.09.1963), p. 7.

Memorial plaque for American soldiers



Location: Cimetière de Walferdange, Walferdange

Type: Plaque

Date: estimated 1987

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: This plaque commemorates 71 US soldiers who died in Walferdange in 1919, all repatriated in 1920. Through conversations with the local council, and as documented by Jos Bour, it could be concluded that it was only in the late 1980s, after the completion of the new cemetery morgue, that this plaque was mounted on its inner wall, an initiative by the local council.⁷³⁶ Estimated to date to 1987, this plaque is therefore one of the latest WWI memorials in Luxembourg, likely also to mark the anniversaries of the liberation of Luxembourg by the US troops in 1944, the Battle of the Bulge and the end of WWII. During these anniversaries, several communities in Luxembourg decided to erect small memorials in honour of the US veterans.⁷³⁷ It can thus be assumed that it was seen as opportune to also create a plaque for these 71 US soldiers from WWI during this period. It is the only known WWI memorial plaque with an English inscription, its spelling in British English rather than American English (honour rather than honor). Certain nouns and expressions, such as First World War, are not capitalised, which might be a conscious stylistic choice. The plaque is situated within the cemetery morgue, a rather large structure and thus easily visible. Despite this, the plaque itself and inscription are only noticeable upon approach and up close. Even though well-maintained, the inconspicuous nature of this plaque, and mounted in a relatively dark corner, the plaque could easily be overlooked.

⁷³⁶ Bour, J. (1987), pp. 338-339.

⁷³⁷ Schoentgen, M. () p. 48.

Memorial plaque for légionnaires of Hamm



Location: Rue Haute, Hamm, Luxembourg City

Type: Plaque on wayside cross

Date: 1919

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: This memorial plaque is mounted on a 18th century wayside cross outside the local church of Hamm along the main road. Inaugurated on 27th April 1919, this plaque is the earliest known WWI memorial in Luxembourg. Limited information about this plaque is available in a short newspaper article, reporting on an event to honour eight surviving *légionnaires* of Hamm and the inauguration of the plaque for two fallen *légionnaires*, both names listed on the plaque.⁷³⁸ While the wayside cross is well visible depending on vantage point, the plaque and inscription, even though in good condition, are not apparent due to its small size, dark lettering, and low positioning. Two additional memorial plaques (one in English and one in Luxembourgish) by the *American Luxembourg Society* thanking the parish of Hamm for their yearly Remembrance Day for American soldiers is mounted on the church wall to its right. Just as the nearby *Luxembourg American Cemetery and Memorial*, these plaques relate to WWII.

⁷³⁸ *L'Indépendance luxembourgeoise*, 49. Jg., n° 68 (26.04.1919), p. 2.

Monument - Remerschen



Location: Waistrooss, Remerschen/Schengen

Type: Monument/wayside cross

Date: unknown

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: This memorial in form of a wayside cross is situated on the main road between Remerschen and Schengen, close to the German border. This is the only identified WWI memorial with an inscription in German. The inscription includes the dates 1914-1918, and a text with a strong religious connotation (Crucified Lord Jesus Christ - Have Mercy on Us). From information received by the local council, referring to a book on the history of *Commune Schengen*, which includes an older photograph of the memorial, a statue of Jesus was originally attached to the cross, but has disappeared.⁷³⁹ Additional written sources on the monument could not be obtained; however, according to a local historian, the memorial is not mentioned in earlier documents from the 1930s, thus suggesting a later creation date. It is said that the cross was constructed based on a promise by the family which initiated it if their son(s) returned from the war. Although the son(s) did not return home, it was decided to build the memorial. The memorial is next to the entrance of a car park leading to *Baggerweier*; however, due to thick and high hedges, it is not visible from the car park. Even though the memorial is visible from the main road, the inscription has considerably faded over time and is hard to decipher from a distance (as evident by the above photograph). This suggests that its purpose as a WWI memorial might not be known to people passing or driving by if not taking the time to approach it to read the inscription.

⁷³⁹ Valentiny, P. (1998) *Chronik einer Moselgemeinde (Remerschen - Schengen - Wintringen)*. Schomer-Turpel.S.A.R.L., p. 269.

Monument aux Morts - Mensdorf



Location: Rue de l'Église, inside church, Mensdorf

Type: Holy water font/altar

Date: 1958

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII

Description: Located on the right side when entering the local church in Mensdorf, this memorial takes the form of a holy water font, as suggested by the watermarks, and altar with religious iconography. The main inscription in Luxembourgish relates to WWII with an additional smaller engraving with the dates 1914-1918 dedicated to Jean Beljon - often also spelled Bellion - who died in 1914. After consultation with the local council, which also reached out to elderly locals and local historians providing some more details on *légionnaire* Jean Beljon and sharing an article from *Luxemburger Wort*, it was confirmed that the memorial was inaugurated in July 1958. This article reported on the death of the sculptor and creator of this memorial, Nicolas Birnbaum, one month after the inauguration of the memorial.⁷⁴⁰ As this memorial is inside a church with no signposting, only churchgoers might know of it. The WWI inscription for Jean Beljon is very small and could easily be overlooked, especially by people seated in the pews on the left side or towards the front.

⁷⁴⁰ *Luxemburger Wort*, 111. Jg., n° 238 (26.08.1958), p. 5.

Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française



Location: Hôtel de Ville de Luxembourg, Luxembourg City

Type: Medal/plaque

Date: 1920/1957/2009

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: Situated inside the capital's city hall (side entrance for *Archives de la Ville de Luxembourg*) this plaque serves a dual purpose as medal of honour given by France to the City of Luxembourg for its patriotic attitude during WWI, asking its citizens to remember. The discovery of this WWI memorial occurred by chance while visiting the archives to consult a series of documents, previously unaware of its existence. Documentation on this medal is also held at the archives. This medal of honour, known as *Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française*, is described as extremely rare, only having been awarded to some 15,000 individuals, six French towns and eight towns outside France, among them Luxembourg City. The medal was first created in 1917 by French President Raymond Poincaré, and given to the City of Luxembourg on 17th July 1920, thereby fitting well into the post-war narrative and coinciding with the presence of French troops after the war. However, the medal disappeared during the Nazi occupation. French President René Coty awarded the *Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française* again in 1957 during a state visit. A memorial plaque including the medal and an inscription was inaugurated on 22nd October 2009, with the purpose to make the medal better known and to keep its memory alive.⁷⁴¹ The plaque and medal are well-maintained, with the inscription easily legible, and mounted on the wall at the entrance hall leading to the archives. Therefore, apart from people working at the city hall, at the archives, or people and researchers visiting the archives or other offices, this plaque remains hidden from view to the public.

⁷⁴¹ LU 03.2:1

Monument aux Morts - Bascharage



Location: Rue de l'Église/Place Claus Cito, Bascharage

Type: Stone monument/wall

Date: 1952

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII

Description: This *Monument aux Morts* remembers the victims of WWII, listing a total of 17 names, also including René Guirsch with the dates 1914-1918, making this a dual memorial for both world wars. Sculpted by Claus Cito, native of the town and creator of the famous *Gëlle Fra*, the monument with religious iconography was inaugurated on 17th August 1952. As this memorial is primarily a WWII monument, there were no specific mentions of WWI or René Guirsch in the corresponding article in *Luxemburger Wort*; however, all 17 names were called out during the inaugural event.⁷⁴² Initially situated next to the local church (as per the article from 1952), the monument has since been moved to *Place Claus Cito* adjacent to the gable wall of a house, likely as a consequence of the demolition of the old church and construction of a new one in the late 1970s.⁷⁴³ Comparing it to a photograph printed in *Luxemburger Wort* from the inaugural event in 1952, it becomes evident that the monument was also amended and rearranged. Being at this open square, the monument, which itself is in good condition, is easily visible; however, the tree planted in front has a considerable impact when standing right in front of the monument. Steps invite people to approach the monument and read the names of the victims. The monument is also located right next the entrance of a secondary school, the *Lycée Technique pour Professions de Santé*; students are thus passing this memorial on a daily basis. The memorial was visited during December, when the *Place Claus Cito* is also used for the Christmas market.

⁷⁴² *Luxemburger Wort*, 105. Jg., n° 231 (18.08.1952), p. 3.

⁷⁴³ *Luxemburger Wort*, 131. Jg., n° 123 (02.06.1978), p. 9.

Monument aux morts 1914-1918 - François Schweisthal - Ettelbruck



Location: Rue du Canal/Rue Abbé Henri Muller, Ettelbruck

Type: Monolith

Date: 1977

Conflict commemorated: WWI

Description: This monolith located behind the church in Ettelbruck serves a dual function; it is a memorial by the city to its sons who volunteered in the ranks of the French and Allied forces, eight of them dying on the battlefields, while also being dedicated to one of the fallen, François Schweisthal, who was one of the main initiators rallying and encouraging Luxembourgish expatriates living in Paris to join the French forces. *Luxemburger Wort* reported on the inauguration held on 29th May 1977 and attended by the last two surviving Luxembourgish *légionnaires*. The memorial was unveiled by the deputy mayor of Ettelbruck and the then French Ambassador to Luxembourg, with both the French and Luxembourgish national anthems being played. The inauguration of this WWI memorial 60 years after the conflict marks the 100th anniversary of Schweisthal, born May 1877 in Ettelbruck.⁷⁴⁴ The memorial is situated at an intersection, next to a busy road with constant traffic. The park-like area around the memorial is well-kept, with trimmed hedges, but an unfortunate placed bin was situated close to it at the time of my visit (not visible on this photograph). A small path leads up to the monolith to allow to read the inscription, which is not legible from a distance due to the dark shades of the memorial and the small print. Next to the memorial, a bit further away from the main road, is also Ettelbruck's *Monument aux Morts* for WWII. Adjacent to the WWI memorial is an information panel, providing details on François Schweisthal and the memorial. Throughout the centre of Ettelbruck are information panels and signposts, mentioning the WWII memorial and the General Patton monument further outside of the centre, but not the WWI memorial.

⁷⁴⁴ *Luxemburger Wort*, 130. Jg., n° 85 (13.04.1977), p. 6; *Luxemburger Wort*, n° 123 (01.06.1977), p. 7.

Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof Clausen



Location: Rue Jules Wilhelm, Clausen, Luxembourg City

Type: Cemetery/granite crosses/name plaques

Date: 1813/1914-1928/post-WWII/unknown date for name plaques - post-1970

Conflict commemorated: WWI, WWII

Description: This old Prussian garrison cemetery in Clausen, dating back to 1813, is now the final resting place of 205 German WWI soldiers, including one who fought under the Austrian flag. The cemetery is under the custodianship of *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V.* During WWI, several German and French soldiers who died in Luxembourgish hospitals were buried at this cemetery. After 1918, French soldiers not able to be repatriated were exhumed and reburied at the *Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre*, and German soldiers initially buried at other local cemeteries throughout the country were transferred to Clausen. While the graves were rearranged during the interbellum, plans for a dedicated war memorial for these soldiers as envisioned by German expatriates, envoys and the *Volksbund* were not realised. The cemetery was redesigned after WWII, also installing several granite crosses in groups of three to mark the graves. The cemetery is well-maintained and in a quiet corner of Clausen, away from the main road leading to Pfaffenthal. The cemetery now also features four plaques listing the 205 names; however, concrete details about these plaques could not be obtained, but estimated to have been created after 1970.

See Chapter 7 for more details.

WWI memorials in Luxembourg

Name	Location	GPS coordinates	Type	Date	Language
Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof Clausen	Rue Jules Wilhelm, Clausen, Luxembourg City	49° 36'54.4"N 6° 08'24.2"E	Military cemetery	1813/1914- 1928/1970s	German
Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre & Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu	Cimetière Notre Dame, Limpertsberg, Luxembourg City	49° 36'58.4"N 6° 07'05.6"E	Mausoleum and tomb	1924	French
Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française	Hôtel de Ville de Luxembourg, Luxembourg City	49° 36'36.7"N 6° 07'48.9"E	Medal/plaque	1920/1957/ 2009	French
Memorial plaque for American soldiers	Cimetière de Walferdange, Walferdange	49° 39'29.4"N 6° 07'58.8"E	Plaque	1987	English
Memorial plaque for François Faber	Parc Municipal, Luxembourg City	49° 36'50.3"N 6° 07'24.3"E	Plaque	1924/1937/ 1991	French
Memorial plaque for French aviator Alfred Furgerot	Cimetière de Differdange, Differdange	49° 31'00.6"N 5° 53'12.9"E	Plaque	unknown	French
Memorial plaque for légionnaires of Esch-sur-Alzette	Musée National de la Résistance, Esch-sur-Alzette	49° 29'32.8"N 5° 58'34.1"E	Plaque	1923	French
Memorial plaque for légionnaires of Tétange	Rue de l'École, École Jean-Pierre Nuel, Tétange	49° 28'27.0"N 6° 02'17.7"E	Plaque	1919/1949	French
Memorial plaque for légionnaires of Hamm	Rue Haute, Hamm, Luxembourg City	49° 36'36.4"N 6° 10'03.6"E	Plaque on wayside cross	1919	French

Monument - Remerschen	Waistrooss, Remerschen/Schengen	49°29'01.9"N 6°21'33.7"E	Monument/ wayside cross	unknown	German
Monument aux Morts - Born	Église St Martin, Schlassstrooss, Born	49°45'39.5"N 6°30'54.4"E	Monolith	1978	French
Monument aux Morts - Fischbach	Rue de l'Église, Fischbach	49°44'47.7"N 6°11'07.8"E	Monolith	2013	Luxembourgish
Monument aux Morts - Bascharage	Rue de l'Église/Place Claus Cito, Bascharage	49°34'05.9"N 5°54'27.3"E	Stone monument/wall	1952	French
Monument aux Morts - Manternach	Cimetière de Manternach, Manternach	49°42'28.9"N 6°25'22.0"E	Cemetery altar/statue	circa 1960- 1965	French
Monument aux Morts - Mensdorf	Rue de l'Église, inside church, Mensdorf	49°39'21.5"N 6°18'08.8"E	Holy water font/altar	1958	Luxembourgish
Monument aux Morts - Redange-sur-Attert	Place Bian, Redange-sur-Attert	49°45'49.0"N 5°53'16.9"E	Stone monument/wall	circa 1963- 1964	French
Monument aux morts 1914-1918 - François Schweisthal	Rue du Canal/Rue Abbé Henri Muller, Ettelbruck	49°50'45.8"N 6°06'02.2"E	Monolith	1977	French
Monument aux Morts des deux guerres - Bonnevoie	Cimetière de Bonnevoie, Bonnevoie, Luxembourg City	49°35'36.8"N 6°08'28.6"E	Obelisk	1922/1957	French
Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf	Rue de Clausen/Rue Malakoff, Clausen, Luxembourg City	49°36'53.6"N 6°08'44.3"E	Column	1924	French
Monument du Souvenir (Gëlle Fra)	Place de la Constitution, Luxembourg City	49°36'33.4"N 6°07'45.7"E	Obelisk with statue	1923/1985	French

WWI commemorative street names in Luxembourg

Name	Location	GPS coordinates	Date
Boulevard de Verdun	Belair, Luxembourg City	49° 36'32.2"N 6° 06'26.3"E	unknown, pre-WWII
Boulevard John J. Pershing	Limpertsberg, Luxembourg City	49° 37'29.4"N 6° 07'16.2"E	1952
Rue Albert Ier	Belair/Hollerich, Luxembourg City	49° 36'21.5"N 6° 07'04.4"E	1925-1929
Rue des Légionnaires	Tétange	49° 28'25.9"N 6° 02'18.7"E	1919
Rue des Légionnaires	Bonnevoie, Luxembourg City	49° 35'43.8"N 6° 08'20.3"E	1925
Rue d'Ethe	Gasperich, Luxembourg City	49° 35'40.8"N 6° 06'59.7"E	1925
Rue du Maréchal Foch	Belair, Luxembourg City	49° 36'30.8"N 6° 06'34.4"E	1930
Rue François Faber	Limpertsberg, Luxembourg City	49° 37'09.5"N 6° 06'57.4"E	1956
Rue Georges Clemenceau	Gasperich, Luxembourg City	49° 35'20.5"N 6° 07'35.6"E	unknown, pre-WWII
Rue Joseph Hansen	Limpertsberg, Luxembourg City	49° 37'07.9"N 6° 06'56.4"E	1956
Rue Marcel Noppeney	Kirchberg-Kiem, Luxembourg City	49° 38'03.6"N 6° 09'49.1"E	1978
Rue Raymond Poincaré	Hollerich, Luxembourg City	49° 36'08.0"N 6° 06'59.8"E	1936
Rue Wilson	Gare, Luxembourg City	49° 36'02.0"N 6° 07'32.1"E	1925

Appendix 2

Location maps of WWI memorials in Luxembourg

Map of Grand Duchy of Luxembourg



WWI memorials in Luxembourg

■ Plaques

- Plaque for American soldiers, Walferdange
- Plaque for François Faber, Luxembourg City
- Plaque for French aviator Alfred Furgerot, Differdange
- Plaque for légionnaires of Esch-sur-Alzette
- Plaque for légionnaires of Tétange
- Plaque for légionnaires of Hamm, Luxembourg City
- Plaque for Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française, Luxembourg City

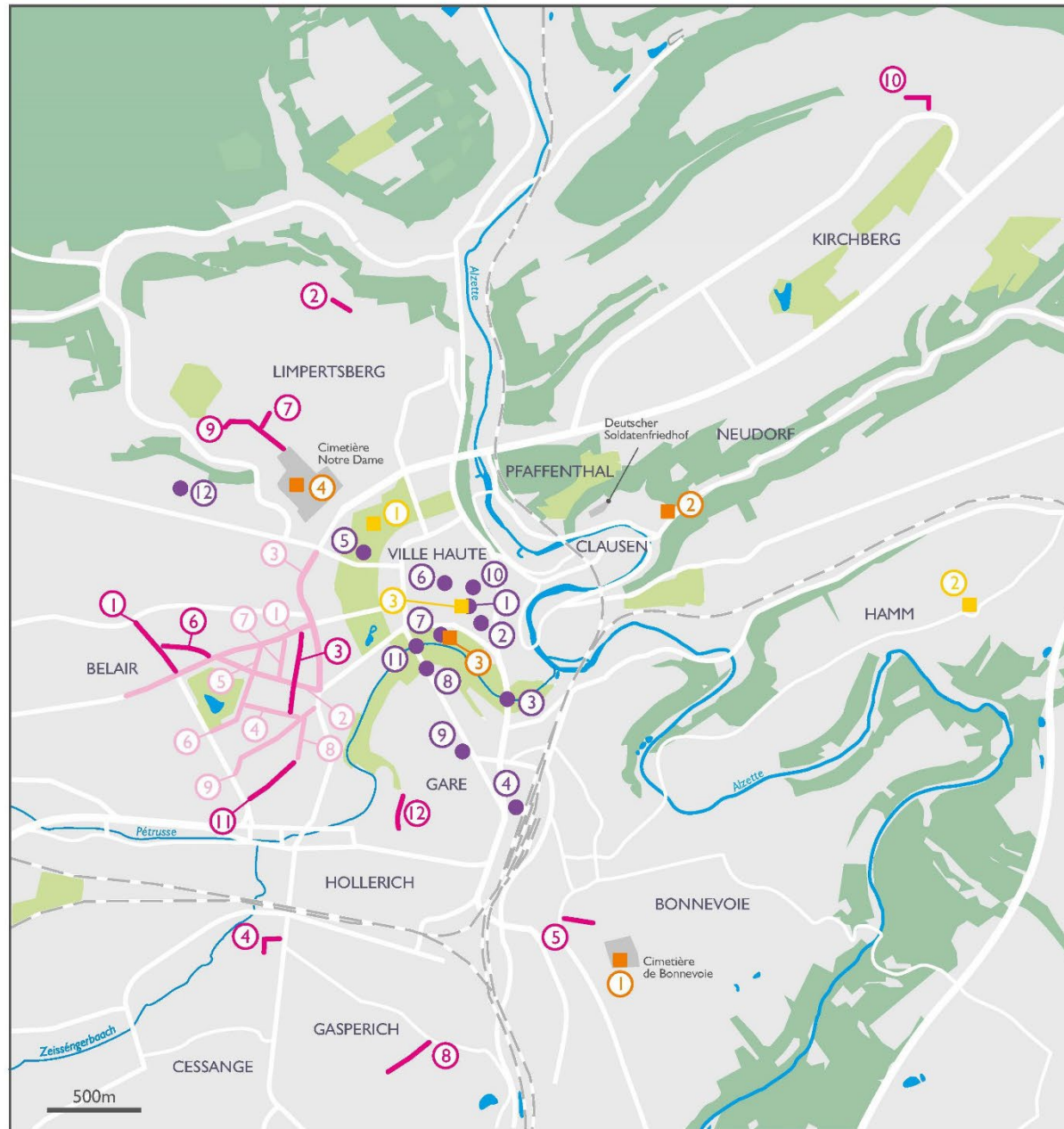
■ Monuments

- Monument aux Morts des deux guerres - Bonnevoie, Luxembourg City
- Monument aux Morts - Born
- Monument aux Morts - Fischbach
- Monument aux Morts - Bascharage
- Monument aux Morts - Manternach
- Monument aux Morts - Mensdorf
- Monument aux Morts - Redange-sur-Attert
- Monument aux Morts - Remerschen
- Monument aux Morts 1914-1918 - François Schweisthal, Ettelbruck
- Monument commémorative de Clausen-Neudorf, Luxembourg City
- Monument du Souvenir (Gëlle Fra), Luxembourg City
- Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre & Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu, Luxembourg City

■ Street names

- Boulevard de Verdun, Luxembourg City
- Boulevard John J. Pershing, Luxembourg City
- Rue Albert Ier, Luxembourg City
- Rue d'Ette, Luxembourg City
- Rue des Légionnaires, Luxembourg City
- Rue des Légionnaires, Tétange
- Rue du Maréchal Foch, Luxembourg City
- Rue François Faber, Luxembourg City
- Rue Georges Clemenceau, Luxembourg City
- Rue Joseph Hansen, Luxembourg City
- Rue Marcel Noppene, Luxembourg City
- Rue Raymond Poincaré, Luxembourg City
- Rue Wilson, Luxembourg City

Map of Luxembourg City



WWI Plaques

- 1 Plaque for François Faber
- 2 Plaque for légionnaires of Hamm
- 3 Plaque for Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française

WWI Monuments

- 1 Monument aux Morts des deux guerres - Bonnevoie
- 2 Monument commémoratif de Clausen-Neudorf
- 3 Monument du Souvenir (Gëlle Fra)
- 4 Mausolée des Soldats Français de la Grande Guerre & Tombe du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu

WWI Street names

- 1 Boulevard de Verdun
- 2 Boulevard John J. Pershing
- 3 Rue Albert Ier
- 4 Rue d'Ethé
- 5 Rue des Légionnaires
- 6 Rue du Maréchal Foch
- 7 Rue François Faber
- 8 Rue Georges Clemenceau
- 9 Rue Joseph Hansen
- 10 Rue Marcel Noppeney
- 11 Rue Raymond Poincaré
- 12 Rue Wilson

Landmarks

- 1 Archives de la Ville de Luxembourg/Hôtel de Ville
- 2 Cathédrale Notre-Dame
- 3 La Passerelle
- 4 Luxembourg Gare
- 5 Parc Municipal
- 6 Place d'Armes
- 7 Place de la Constitution
- 8 Place de Metz
- 9 Place de Paris
- 10 Place Guillaume II
- 11 Pont Adolphe
- 12 Stade Josy Barthel

Other commemorative street names

- 1 Avenue du Dix Septembre
- 2 Avenue Guillaume
- 3 Boulevard Grande-Duchesse Charlotte
- 4 Rue Adolphe
- 5 Rue d'Orange
- 6 Rue de Bragançe
- 7 Rue de Crécy
- 8 Rue de Nassau
- 9 Rue Marie-Adélaïde

Appendix 3

Research questions for phenomenological survey

1. The location

- a. Access
 - i. Where is it?
 - ii. How accessible is it? How can it be reached?
 - iii. Is it signposted?
- b. Surroundings
 - i. What other features are around it? (trees, buildings, streets, etc.)
 - ii. Any distractions like noise or traffic?
 - iii. Would another location be more suitable?
- c. Visibility
 - i. How visible is it? Is anything obstructing it?
 - ii. From which vantage point does it become visible?
 - iii. Does it differ from another vantage point?

2. The memorial

- a. Design (additional info on design can be drawn from other sources if available)
 - i. What type is it? (monument, statue, plaque, etc.)
 - ii. Size (small, medium, large)
 - iii. What design/imagery was used?
 - iv. What material was used? (if known)
- b. Meaning
 - i. What or who does it remembered? What is omitted?
 - ii. What are the inscriptions? (dates, names, quotes, etc.)
 - iii. What language was used? (Luxembourgish, French, German, English)
 - iv. Anything added/removed at a later stage impacting original meaning?
- c. Appearance
 - i. Did it change/deteriorate over time, being exposed to weather?
 - ii. Are the surface and surroundings clean? Is the inscription legible?
 - iii. Any flowers, tokens or notes left there by visitors?
 - iv. Are there other indications that people visit it?
- d. Description of atmosphere
- e. What type of use did the place have before? (if known)
- f. Who raised it and when? (if known)

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AE-00682 - Inauguration du Monument du Légionnaire Luxembourgeois Inconnu et des Soldats Français de la Grande-Guerre morts dans le Grand-Duché (16.11.1924), 1924-1925 (Dossier)

AE-00697 - Inauguration du Monument du Souvenir (27.5.1923), 1919-1923 (Dossier)

AE-01300 - Monument commémoratif à Bonnevoie: Inauguration (juin), 1922 (Dossier)

AE-01347 - Monument commémoratif à Clausen-Neudorf des victimes du bombardement par avions du 8.7.1918: Inauguration le 3.8.1924, 1924 (Dossier)

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